

◊ E O M A X

O R

THE GRAND IMPRUDENCE
of men running the hazard of (2)

FIGHTING AGAINST GOD,
In suppressing any Way, Doctrine, or
Practice, concerning which they know not.
certainly whether it be from God or no.

Being the substance of two Sermons,
Preached in Colemanstreet, upon occasion of the
late disaster sustain'd in the West.
With some necessary Enlargements thereunto.

By JOHN GOODWIN, *Pastor of the Church of God there.*

The second time Imprinted.

HEB. 10. 31.

It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

MAT. 21. 44.

*Whosoever shall fall on (or, stumble at) this stone, shall be
broken in pieces.*

Imprimatur. *John Bachiler.*


L O N D O N;

Printed for Henry Overton, and are to be sold at his Shop
entring into Popes-head-Alley out of Lombard-street.

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1200

Practice, concerning which they have not
disputed any Way, Doctrines or
Rites, and have lived in the most
perfect Unity and Love, and have
been running the Race of
the Christian Life in a
peaceable and quiet Manner.



The record is printed.

MAY 1944

Walter J. Hall (or, Francis J.)
Director

Impressum. John R. Baker.

Printed for Henry Overton, and are to be sold at his shop
in Pall-mall, near the Theatre, in the Strand.

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READER;



I have an English saying, that the burnt childe dreads the fire. I have oft been cast into the fire of mens zealous indignations, by an unclean spirit of calumny and slander; Some have reported, that I deny justification by Christ, i. that the Sun is up at noon-day; Others, that I deny the immortalitye of the soule, i. that I murdered my father and my mother; Others, that I have preached against

the Parliament and Assembly, i. that I am out of my wits, and weary of my present life, and carelesse of that which is to come; Others yet againe, that sometimes I stood for Presbytery, but am now fallen to Independency; particularly, that I both preach and practise non-conformity to a letter of mine written some yeeres since to Mr. T. G. that is, that once I was so wise as to thinke that six and seven made just nineteene; but now am become so weake, as to judge they onely make thirteene, and no more. I perceive there are more Sons of Belial, then those that witnessed against Naboth, that he blasphemed God and the King. But having no vineyard to accommodate any man, I cannot easily conceive, what men and their tongues meane to be still up in such unchristian contestations with me; except this be it; Because I speak the truth, and men are not able to beare it; therefore they resolve (it seems) to make me speak such untruths, that I my selfe shall not be able to beare. I confesse, I doe not much dread this fire, made of the tongues of asps and vipers, not because I have not been sufficiently burnt by it, but partly because I have been a long time accustomed to such burnings, and have found them rather purifying, then consuming: partly, because the great Apostle informs me, that the way by which he passed into his glory, was through honour, and dishonour, through good report, and evill report. Yet nevertheless, I had rather give an account of mine own words, then of other mens pretending to be mine; and so to keep out of the fire, as far as the peace and safety of my own soule and other mens, will suffer me. And this is the true account (Reader) of the publishing

1 King. 21.
10.

2 Cor. 6. 8.

TO THE READER.

Joh. 8. 32.

lishing of these Sermons, which (haply) had not been an action so necessary otherwise. Understanding that the foule spirit, which hath for severall yeers haunted my ministry, was beginning to practise upon these Sermons also, I thought it the safer course of the two, to put my selfe into the hands of the Truth (which yet perhaps will not much befriend me neither, in the thoughts and hearts of men, though with God, I am certain, it will) then to expose both it and my selfe to be rent and torne by him. What good, or hurt, they will or are like to doe, now they are gotten abroad, is not easie, either for thee, or me, so much as to conjecture. Be it in this, as God and men shall agree. When the danger of the disease runs high, there is little hope but onely in that physicke, whereof there is some feare. We are under a bondage of much misery, and it is onely the Truth (as our Saviour saith) that can make us free: and yet such is our condition and misery, that there is cause to feare, lest the Truth, which onely is able to make us free, should increase our bondage and misery, by being rejected and opposed by us, when it comes in love and mercy to visit us, and to blesse us out of our misery. For this end I was borne (as our Saviour saith of himselfe, Joh. 18. 37.) that I should beare witnesse to the truth, not to the opinions or apprehensions of men. In which respect I know I am like to have the harder quarter and service in the world; but God hath made me a lover of men in such a degree, that I can willingly consecrate my selfe unto their service, through any sufferings from them. If this world faile me, I know God hath prepared another for a reserve, which will stand by me, and will not faile. Reader, take my prayers along with thee, and an honest heart of thine own; and so passe on to the Sermons before thee; doubtlesse they will either strengiben thy hand in the way thou art in, or guide thy feet into a way thou art not in, or at least qualifie thy spirit with Christian patience and respects towards such a way.

From my study in Colemanstreet,

Octob. 2. 1644.

Thine with an upright and
single heart in Christ Jesus,

JOHN GOODWIN.



Θ E O M A X I A ;

O R

The Grand Imprudence of men,
running the hazard of *Fighting against God*,
in suppressing any Way, Doctrine, or Pra-
ctice, concerning which they know not certain-
ly whether it be from God, or no.

A C T S 5. 38.

And now I say unto you, Refraine your selves from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsell or worke be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, yee cannot destroy it, lest yee be found even fighters against God.



When the Children of *Israel*, in the progresse of their Warres upon the *Canaanites*, wherein God had promised to be with them, and to give them successe, and that a man of their enemies should not be able to stand against them: notwithstanding they fought under the protection of many such promises as these, yet met with a disaster and losse, thirty six of them being slaine by the men of *Ai*; and the rest of the partie ingaged in that service put to rout, and chased by their enemies: God himselfe upon the great dejection and solenne humiliation of the Elders of *Israel*, and *Joshua* their Generall, was pleased to make knowne unto him by speciall revelation, what root of bit-

B

ternesse

terresse it was that brought forth this fruit of death, what sin by name it was amongst them, that had separated between him and them in their late sad miscarriage, yea, and would separate still, to their further and greater misery, except they took a course to make an atonement for themselves, by purging & cleansing themselves from it. Onely the discovery or finding out of the person that had committed the sin, was put upon *Ioshua* and the people; wherein yet again they were directed by God to such a method or means for this discovery, that God himselfe may be said too to have discovered even the sinner also. For he it was, that by a speciall directing hand of his providence, caused the lot to fall upon *Achan*, who was the man that in taking the *excommunicate thing*, had sin'd that great and speciall provocation, which was fallen in this guilt of wrath from heaven upon the people. These things you shall find related more at large *Iosh. 7*. From which passages by the way (amongst many other very observable) you may take knowledge of these three things.

First, That when God is at any time engaged, and his hand in (as we use to say) shewing mercy and doing good to his people, he is seldome or never wont to change or alter the tenour of his present dispensations, to break off the course of his grace by suffering evill to come upon them, but upon some speciall discontent taken, from some speciall sin or other, one or more, committed by them.

Secondly, That sometimes the sin of one, or of some few in a great society or body of people, in the provocation or guilt of it, redounds and runs over to the involving and defiling of the whole society, and rendring all the members thereof obnoxious to the displeasure of God.

Thirdly, That the best, if not the only way for the people of God, being under the disfavour of God, and stroke of his displeasure, to make atonement for themselves, and to recover his favour, is to make diligent search, and strict inquiry, what that sin by name should be, which hath turned away the heart of their God from them, and accordingly to remove it.

My brethren, the case of the children of *Israel* upon their losse neere unto the Citie of *Ai*, is our condition and case at this day; save onely that the hand of God hath been laid heavier upon us, then

then it was upon them, in that breach. God had begun to doe great and gracious things for us, yea he had gone on for a good space together, treading & trampling down the strength of our enemies under us apace; in somuch that wee began to take our harps down from the willow trees, on which we had hung them, to prepare our selves to sing *the song of Moses, the man of God*: but loe on the sudden we are *smitten back againe into the places of Dragons*, and the God of our lives *hath covered us with the shadow of death*. That vision of peace and good things which was let down from heaven unto us, and was come so neere us, that wee began to arise, thinking none other but to fall to and eate presently, is now again taken up from us into the heavens, and we have lost the sight of it. The best art and wisdom we can use to open the heavens over us, and cause them to deliver down that treasure again to us, to heal our present wound, if it be not deadly, is to make as narrow a search, as strict an inquiry, as we can, what that particular and speciall sin or provocation amongst us is, the chastisement whereof is now upon us, and which hath brought the rod of this indignation upon our backs. If God himself would please by special revelation to make known what this sin is, as he did unto *Joshua & the people of Israel*, satisfaction in this point were at hand, nor should we need to abide the various and conjecturall discourses of men, Ministers or others, about the matter: but having perfected that standing Revelation of himselfe, the Scriptures, he refraines revelations extraordinary, and leaves his people to consult with these Oracles of his for resolution in all such cases of question and difficulty as this; onely promising the gracious assistance & guidance of his Spirit unto those that shall ask it of him, and not lay stumbling-blocks in their way otherwise, to direct them in such dark and dubious inquiries as these. And one speciall end (I conceive) aimed at by that authority, which hath set apart this day for a solemne humiliation of our selves before God; was, that Ministers and people should joyne together in fervent prayer and supplication unto God, that the one may be directed to make a true and unpartiall discovery of this sin, and the other judge of the discovery being made, accordingly: that so the troubler of *Israel* being found out, execution may be done, and God pacified. In consideration whereof it is,

that I made choice of the Scripture read unto you, upon the present occasion; Conceiving that very sin to be there described, yea, and expressed by name, (though somewhat more generall) which hath occasioned the said interruption of late made in our hopefull proceedings, yea, and which in all likelihood wrought against us formerly, both in that blow which was reached us from heaven, in that as strange, as sorrowfull a defeat at *Newark*, and otherwise; but was not then knowne or considered of. The Lord grant that yet at last it may enter into all our hearts to conceive aright, and to consider of it, lest it brings forth yet againe like bitter fruits, yea, and magnifies it selfe at last in our utter ruine and destruction.

But let us adresse unto the words; and in them consider, first, their relation and coherence in the Context, and then their sense and meaning. For the former; the words are part of a speech made by one *Gamaliel* (as he is called *ver. 34.*) a Pharisee, and Doctor of the Law, in an Assembly or Councell at *Jerusalem*. The Councell (as appeares *ver. 21. &c.*) was called, about the Apostles, their Doctrine and proceedings; the chiefe designe and intendment of it, was to consider and resolve what course to take with them, how to suppress both them and their Doctrine, being both looked upon as prejudiciall to their personall and private interests, both of honour and profit, in that State and Nation; and as likely to carry away the hearts and affections of much people from them. When they had sent for *Peter* and the other Apostles by a Captain with his Officers, to appeare before the Councell, the Prolocutor or chiefe Priest, charged them after this manner; *ver. 28. Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name? and yee have filled Jerusalem with your Doctrine, &c.* When *Peter* and the other Apostles, standing stiffe to their tackling, had made their answer, fully justifying what they had done, and given a brief accompt of that Doctrine about which they were questioned, and of their calling to preach and beare witnesse of the same unto the world; it is said (*ver. 33.*) that the Councell, seeing them upon those terms, hearing them speake at such a rate, *burst in sunder for anger* (as the former translation) or (as the latter hath it) *were cut at the heart, and took counsell how to slay them*. What? would they not submit to the Authority and advice of such a Reverend, learned,

learned, and pious Assembly as that? Did they thinke themselves wiser then they? would they preach a Doctrine that should asperse them, and bring them out of credit and request with the people? Such men as they were not meet to be *tolerated* in the State, nor yet to live; and therefore they would fall upon some course, how to free themselves, the State and Nation of them, and that must be in no lighter way, with no lower hand, then death it selfe, they must die for it. This (it seems) was the sense and resolution of the generality of the Assembly, untill one of them, (that *Gamaliel* we speake of) a man of a better temper and deeper reach then his fellowes, excited to speak, and assisted in speciall manner by God in speaking, by a grave Speech tending to moderation, qualified their spirits in part, and brought them to accept of somewhat a lighter atonement from the Apostles, for their supposed sin, then their lives would have amounted unto. For their spirits were so full of bitterness and indignation against them, that notwithstanding all that *Gamaliel* could say, they were resolved to have their peniworths of them, (as we use to say) to ease themselves on them so far, as to cause them to be beaten, and withall, severely to charge them the second time, to give over preaching their erroneous and dangerous Doctrine, *to speak no more in the Name of Jesus*, ver. 40. What the tenor of *Gamaliels* Speech was, from the beginning to the end of it, you may read, beginning at ver. 35. untill the end of 39. *Men of Israel, take heed to your selves, what you doe to these men*; as if he should have said, Yee will but run a needlesse hazard of bringing evill, or ruine upon your selves, by attempting any thing for the present, in a way of violence against these men; implying, that men had need take heed how they ingage themselves to suppress, molest, or destroy any generation or sort of men whatsoever, untill they have a clear and expresse warrant from heaven for the execution. To perswade them not to be too precipitate or forward in any course of violence against the Apostles, he declares to them by a double instance (well known unto themselves) that if they be seducers and evill men, and so worthy to be destroyed, God himselfe would in a short time, reveale his wrath from heaven against them, and bring them and their work to ruine. For thus he had done both formerly by one *Thendas*, and more lately by *Judas of Galilee*; who projecting great matters for themselves,

selves, without any warrant or authority from God, though they went on, and seem'd for a while to prosper in their way, drawing great numbers of people after them, were yet, both they and all their complices and followers, by a speciall hand of God scattered and brought to nought. Upon the mention of these two memorable examples of Divine Justice against Seducers and Deceivers, he infers as followeth in the words read unto you.

And now I say unto you, Refraine from these men, and let them alone, &c.

This for the coherence.

For the sense of the words (briefly) *Refraine from*, ἀπέχεσθαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν, that is, stand, or keep off from them, depart from them, goe yee your way, and let them go their way; καὶ ἐδίδαξε αὐτοὺς, let them alone, or suffer them, that is, (as some understand it) do not onely forbear persecuting of them your selves by your authority, but be no occasion that the *Roman* power any wayes interposeth to molest them: do not betray them into the hand of violence otherwise; or else the doubling of the caution may import the weightinesse of the matter in his apprehension that speaketh. However, by this double Caution or Item he gives unto them, not to have any thing to do (for the present) with the Apostles, in any way of molestation, he discovers an utter aversenesse in him to such proceedings. Wherefore he gives this reason further.

For if this counsell or work be of men, it will come to nought] i. If the design which these men drive, with the method, course and means whereby they carry it on, hath no better foundation to bear it up, but either their own wisdoms, interest and authority, or some other mens, κατὰ τοὺς ἰσχυροὺς, it will be dissolved, or come to nought, it will soon discover its originall by its end; if it were taken out of the dust, to dust it will return; and they that are engaged in it, will fall and sink with it. *But if it be from God*] i. If it be countenanced or authorized by God, if he be the Founder of it; *Ye cannot destroy or dissolve it, lest, &c.* i. you must not, or you ought not, to attempt any thing against it to destroy or dissolve it, because by such an attempt as this, you will do no better then fight against God. *Ye cannot*] viz. lawfully, or wisely, or upon any good ground. There is a double impotency, or impossibility often mentioned in Scripture; the one we may call *naturall*, or *physicall*, the other *moral*

rall. With the first kind of impossibility, things are said to be impossible, when there wants a naturall or executive principle of strength or power in any kind to do them: with the latter, that is said to be impossible for a man to do, for the doing whereof he hath no ground or warrant either in the word of God, or in reason or equity, though he hath never so much naturall strength or power to do it. Of this latter kind the Apostle *Paul* speaketh, *2 Cor. 13. 8.* where he saith, *that he could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth;* meaning that he had no ground or warrant, either from God, or otherwise, to do any such thing. So again, *1 Cor. 10. 21. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of the Devil;* i. yee cannot doe it lawfully; or with any congruity either to the principles of Christianity, or of sound reason. Of this kind of impotence or impossibility, that common saying in the Civill law speaketh, *Id tantum possumus quod jure possumus.* Of the other kind we have many instances also; *I spake to thy Disciples to cast him out, but they could not (Mark 9. 18)* i. they wanted an executive principle or power whereby to do it: otherwise it was lawfull enough for them to have done it: So again, *Mark 6. 19.* and *Mark 2. 4.* besides many other.

Destroy or dissolve it] i. do or attempt any thing to destroy it. Not only the endeavours and attempts, but even the purposes and intents of doing things, are often in Scripture expressed by words which properly signifie the doing or effecting the things themselves. *Many good works* (saith our Saviour, *Jo. 10. 32.*) *have I shewed you from my Father: for which of these works do you stone me?* i. do you intend or go about to stone me? for they had not yet actually stoned him. Thus *Heb. 11. 17. Abraham* is twice said to have offered up his son *Isaac*, because he was fully intended, and had attempted to offer him. Besides many the like: So here, *you cannot destroy it*, i. you ought not, you cannot with reason go about or attempt the destroying of it—*Lest you be found even fighters against God*; meaning, that in case the doctrine and way of those men, against whom they were incensed, should be from God, and they nevertheless seek to destroy them, they would by such a course, dash themselves against such a stone, as would break them to pieces, they would be found even to fight against God. That clausall particle *lest*, doth not alwayes note a hazard, or uncertainty of an effect

* See Mat. 4. 6
and Mat. 13.

15.

effect or consequent ; but many times signifies as much as *ἵνα μὴ, ut non*, and is us'd as well to signify the dependance as well of a certain and necessary, as of a contingent effect, upon its cause : * So here, *you cannot destroy it, lest you be found, &c.* i. if you attempt to destroy it, *you will be found, &c.*

Be found] The word *εὑρισκόμενος* to be found, in such a construction as this, oft notes the unexpectedness of somewhat befalling a person, whether in respect of his own, or other mens expectations. Thus it is said of the Virgin *Mary*, that before *Joseph* and she came together, *εὑρίσκειν ἐν γαστρὶ ἄρσεν.* *she was FOUND with child*, meaning, beyond, or contrary to expectation. So *Luk.* 9. 36. whereas *Moses* and *Elias* were immediately before the voyce from heaven, taken notice of by the Apostles to have been present with Christ upon the Mount, as soone as ever the voyce was past, it is said of him, *εὑρίσκειν μόνος*, *he was found alone*, to imply that *Moses* and *Elias* were withdrawn before the Apostles were aware, or thought of it. To passe by other instances for this importance of the word ; it is said of *Babylon the Great* (*Rev.* 18. 24.) *that in her was found (εὑρίσκειν) the blood of the Prophets, and of the Saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth*; meaning, that whereas this City had till now thought her self the most religious City under heaven, the Mother and Patronesse of Prophets and Saints, an enemy onely unto Heretiques and persons hatefull unto God ; now when God came to call her to an account, and to enter into judgement with her, contrary to her expectation and opinion of her self, she was discovered and evicted to have been the most cruell and bloody enemy that ever *Prophets* or *Saints* had, yea, and further, a principall Actresse in the slaughter of many millions otherwise. So *Gamaliel*, expressing himselfe thus to the Councell, *lest you be FOUND even fighters against God* ; gives them to understand, that how holy, wise, or just soever they might seeme in their own eyes, yea, and might think themselves the furthest of any men under heaven from practising or fighting against God, yet if they went on with their present intentions and resolutions against the men they had now before them, they might fall into this heave guilt and condemnation, when they thought least of it. The heaviness of which guilt is further implied, in that emphaticall particle *ἅ, even, even fighters against God* ; which particle of speech in such constructions as this, is intensive in an high

high degree, and still imports somewhat very remarkable in what is joyned with it. In such an importance as this, you shall find it used; *Matth. 12.8.* for the son of man is Lord, *καὶ κύριός ἐστιν, even of the Sabbath*; meaning, that this was a very transcendent Lordship indeed, and such as was incompatible unto any, but unto him who need count it no robbery to be equall with God. So *Mar. 13. 22.* and elsewhere. Thus *Gamaliel* admonishing his Colleagues, to consider well what they did, *lest they should be found EVEN fighters against God*; plainly intimates unto you, that this is one of the worst stones in the world to stumble at, and that no providence or inconsiderateness whatsoever besides, is like to make any such breach upon the comfort and peace of the Creature, as for men to ingage themselves in any such action or course, wherein they shall be found fighters against God.

Εἰσπραγοί, Fighters against God]. Every act of sin, especially with knowledge and consent of will, is, (in a sense) a fighting against God: but that sin which *Gamaliel* here intends in his expression of fighting against God, is a sin of an higher nature then ordinary, as appears by the particle *καὶ, even*, joyn'd with it, and formerly opened. Therefore by fighting against God (in this place) must needs be meant some high and peremptory action or ingagement of the creature, wherein it opposeth God in some speciall or remarkable design, which hee seeketh either to set on foot, or else to carry on in the world, whether the opposer knowes it to be a design of God's or no. And thus the Propagating of that Doctrine, which the Apostles preached, being a design of God, the opposition of the councill against it, especially with so high an hand as the crushing or slaying of the Apostles, who were appointed by God to publish it, would have been, was, and would have been very properly, a fighting against God.

The words explain'd, are matter ready prepared for Doctrine and Observation. Only one word (by the way) for Answer to that Question; What authority, weight, or credit, is to be given to that which *Gamaliel* delivers in this Speech of his to the Councill? Whether may we build upon every thing, or any thing, spoken by him, as authorized by God?

I answer;

- I. That there is little question to be made, but that the Spirit

of the man, was in speciall manner touch'd and stirr'd up by the Spirit of God, to interpose in the behalf of the Apostles, as hee did; as the spirit of *Nicodemus* (another branch of the same root) formerly had been, to stand up and speak in the behalf of Christ, *Joh. 7. 51.*

2. The principall end and scope of what hee spake, being the rescuing of the Apostles from the bloody Counsels of those who had concluded their death, and were consulting about the execution; plainly sheweth, that there was more of God then ordinary in the thing, especially if we consider further, that he who thus inexpectedly appeared with shield and buckler for the Apostles defence, was of that sect or generation of men, who generally hated and opposed the Doctrine of Christ with more inveterate and virperous malignity of spirit, then any other.

3. Evident it is: 1. That the intent, end, and scope of *Gamaliels* in this Speech to the Councell, being the bringing of the Apostles from the bloody rage and violence of men, was good, and agreeable to the Will and Word of God. And 2. As evidently likewise it is, that the Speech it self, in the whole carriage, and in all the passages of it, is duly, and with all exactnesse of wisdom and prudence, proportioned to the end, and tends in a direct and vulgar way to effect it. Now whatsoever directly and regularly tends to the effecting of that which is good, must needs be good, and consequently from God. That which is good may occasionally, and by some collaterall influence of Providence, be brought to passe, by means that are evill; but in a regular and direct way, it can only be produced by that which is good. There is no more friendship or fellowship naturally, between good ends and ill means, then is between light and darkness, Christ and Belial. But

4. (And lastly) There being nothing in all this Speech (excepting only the historicall instances, the truth of which, it seems, was generally knowne among the *Jewes*, and is attested by *Josephus* their great Historian) but what is fully consonant with the Word of God, (unquestionably so acknowledged) elswhere, the credit and authority of it, for matter of truth, is one and the same with those other Scriptures corresponding with it. *What wee here learne* (saith *Gualter* upon the place) *should be unto us as an Oracle, viz. that the counsels of God are not to be defeated or hindered by any strength*

Insuper oraculi instar nobis esse debet, quod Dei consilia nullis hominum viribus impedire posse, humana vero sua sponte collabi discimus, Gual. Homil 37. in Act.

strength of man; but, for the counsels of men, they fall and sink, and come to nothing of themselves.

In the words there be these six insuing points of Doctrine, faire and large, besides many others of a more collaterall and illative observation.

First, From those words, *ver. 38. And now I say unto you, Refraine from these men, and let them alone: for, &c.* Observe, that it is a point of much wisdom to forbear the oppression, or suppression of such Persons, Doctrines, and wayes, which men have any reasonable cause at all to judge or thinke, that they are, or may be, from God.

Secondly, From those doubtfull expressions of so great a Doctor of the Law, and one that knew how to measure and estimate the Authority and weight of a Council-determination, and besides can no wayes be suspected of any disaffection or prejudicatenesse against such Authority, from those doubtfull expressions (I say) of this man, *If this counsell or work be of men, &c.* And again, *If it be of God, &c.* Observe, That the determination of a Council, or of the major part of a Council against a Way, Doctrine or Practice, is no demonstrative or sufficient prooffe for any wise man to rest or build upon, that such a Way, Doctrine or Practice, are not from God. The whole Council, as you heard, this one man excepted, had peremptorily concluded the Doctrine and Practice of the Apostles, to be, not from God, but from men, and thereupon were in high consultation to suppress them, and that by death; yet all this did not satisfie Gamaliel in point of judgement or conscience, hee was still but where he was, doubtfull, and in suspence with himself about the businesse.

Thirdly, From that clause, *If this counsell or work be from men, it will come to nought*] Observe, that every invention, contrivance, way or device of man, especially in things either appertaining or pretending to appertain unto God, in matters of Religion, will in time wear out into nothing and be dissolved.

Fourthly, From the Connexion or Dependance between the former and latter parts of *ver. 39. But if it be from God, yee cannot destroy it, lest, &c.* Observe, That for any man, or men, to attempt the suppression of any Doctrine, Way or Practice that is from God, is to fight against God himself.

Fifthly, From that significant phrase or expression, of being

FOUND fighters against God, ver. 39. Observe, That many, who possibly for the present may conceive and thinke, and that with much confidence, that they fight for God, when the truth comes to an unpartiall and perfect scanning, will be found to have fought against him.

Sixthly, (and lastly) From the importance and weight of that emphaticall particle, *even*, in the last clause, *Lest yee be found EVEN fighters against God*; Observe, that fighting against God, is a most dangerous posture or ingagement, for a creature to be taken or found in by God at any time. The dread and terror of such a misprision as this, is the base and ground-work, upon which Gamaliel builds the fabrick of that important counsell and advice, which hee gives unto his fellowes, throughout his discourse or speech made unto them.

We shall for the present (passing by all the rest) pitch upon that Doctrine mentioned in the fourth place, the tenor and effect whereof was this; *That for any man to endeavour or attempt the suppression of any Doctrine, Practice, or Way, which is from God, is to fight against God himself.*

For the sense and true import of the Doctrine, I shall need to adde little beyond what was said, in explication of the words; here wee briefly shewed what was meant by fighting against God. I now only adde this, (which is somewhat more particular) that it is not every degree or kind of opposing a Way, Doctrine, or designe of God, which either the Text, or the Doctrine calleth *a fighting against God*; but only such an imposing which is peremptory, and carried on with an high hand, so that those Agents or Instruments of God, which hee hath anointed to hold forth that Way, Doctrine, or Designe of his in the world, are not suffered to execute their Commission, but are countermanded, either by the Authority or over-bearing strength and power of men. It is one thing to oppose or contend against a Doctrine or Way of God, *per modum Doctoris*, as when a Minister through a mistake or weakness of judgement, pleads for Baal against God, preacheth error up, and truth down, which may befall the best and faithfullest of men: another to do it, *per modum Judicis*, as when men will assume an Authoritative power, whether Ecclesiastique or Civill, to suppress or silence the publishing, practising, arguing, or debating of such Wayes or Doctrines, with the judgements and consciences of

of men. It is true, even this kind of opposing them, is sometimes incident to men, otherwise upright in the main before God: but the children of this contention and contestation against their Maker, must expect to be taught more wisdom and reverence towards him, with briers and thorns. If men fight against God after any such manner as this, upon such terms, as if they were Gods too, this will engage him to take up arms also in his own defence, and provoke him to fight against those, who fight against him. This for opening the Doctrine.

For the confirmation of the truth of it, wee shall not need to cause many Scriptures to labour: the word will be sufficiently established in the mouth of two or three of these Witnesses. *Why do the Heathen rage, (saith David) and the people imagine a vain thing? The Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsell together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, &c.* Those expressions, of raging, setting themselves, taking counsell together against the Lord and his Anointed, amount every whit as much, as to a fighting against the Lord. And what was it, that the Heathen, People, Kings, and Rulers of the Earth, did, or attempted to do against the Lord and against his Anointed; (meaning Christ) Was it any thing else but to quench that fire, which Christ (as himself saith) came to kindle, to suppress the Gospel, to cut off those Wayes of righteousness and holiness from the knowledge and practice of men, which are therein recommended and held forth unto the world? These are the bands, which they set themselves thus to cut asunder, and the cords, which, if it had been possible, they would have cast from them. *Saul, Saul, (saith the Lord Christ from Heaven unto him, as hee was travelling towards Damascus) Why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest, &c.* Act. 9. 4, 5. To persecute Christ (and consequently, God himself, who is in Christ, 2^d Cor. 5.) imports every whit as much, as to fight against Christ, and somewhat more. But why is Saul here charged with persecuting Christ? What course of hostility did hee run or practice against him? It is said (ver. 2.) that he desired Letters of the high Priest to Damascus to the Synagogues, that if he found any of this WAY, whether they were men, or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Whereby it appears that

Psal. 2. 1, 3, 3.

that the precise opposition against Christ, upon which *Saul* was arrested from Heaven (as we heard) under the terms of *persecuting* him, was his attempting with so high and bloody an hand, to destroy out of the world that *WAY* of worshipping and serving God, which Christ in his Gospel recommends unto, and chargeth upon the world. *Men and women* were not the precise and formall object of his hatred and persecution, but that *Way* of Christ in the Gospel, which they maintained, practised, and taught, who were persecuted by him. If hee could have told how otherwise to have gotten this *WAY* out of their hearts, tongues, and lives, and consequently out of the world, then by molesting, vexing, and persecuting them, it is not like that hee would have proceeded against them, with so rough and cruell an hand. It is said (*Rev. 12. 7.*) *That there was war in Heaven; Michael and his Angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought, and his Angels.* Whether *Michael* in this Scripture be Christ himself, (as ancient Interpreters generally carried it) or some prime Angel appointed by Christ, to be as a Generall or Head to his Saints and servants, in those wars and fiery conflicts, wherein they were for a long time engaged against Satan, and his bloody Agents in the *Roman Empire*, (as some later Expositors conceive) is not much materiall. But it is here expressly said, that *the Dragon and his Angels*, that is, the Devill and his Instruments, ignorant and blood-thirsty-men, *fought*, viz. against *Michael and his Angels*, i. against Christ himself in those appointed by him to hold forth the Way and Gospel of his Kingdome unto the world. But why, or how are they said to have fought against Christ? What was their engagement or attempt against him? Questionlesse nothing else but the extirpation and ejection of the Doctrine and Way of his Gospel out of the world, by the torments, slaughter and ruine of those who professed them, and by this profession, gave them a speciall subsistence and being in the World. For that Rule, Doctrine, or Way, which is not practised or professed in the world, languisheth, and is little better then dead. I had but one Scripture more, and then I have done with the prooffe of the Point, in this kinde. *Then cometh the end* (saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 15. 24.*) *when hee, (i. Christ) shall have delivered up the Kingdome to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power.* Why the end should not

be, untill Christ hath put downe all rule, and all authority and power, i. all kinde of Rule, Authority and Power; this reason is rendred, ver. 25. *For hee must reigne till hee hath put all enemies under his feet*, I demand, Why should all Rule, all Authority and Power, as well Ecclesiasticall as Civill, be looked upon, as Enemies unto Christ? What is the enmity or hostility they exercise against him? Doubtlesse no lawfull Rule, Authority, or Power, are Enemies to Christ, either in their nature or institution, but are confederate with him. It is their degeneration in their exercise and actings, that renders them of an hostile interpretation to him. There is none of them all, but is apt ever and anon, to be fighting against him, and that by some peremptory and stiffe oppoling and iupprelssing some way, Doctrine or Practice of his, where they have to do. And this is the quarrell which the Lord Christ hath to the whole fraternity or association of them; for this hee counts them his enemies.

The Reasons of the Point which we shall briefly touch, are three:

First, he that attempts or seeks by an high hand to suppress any Doctrine, Way or Practice which is from God, may well be conceived, and said to fight against God, because he opposeth, and that with vehemence and might, the Will of God, and that in a very considerable act, motion, or desire of it. There is no Way, Doctrine, or Practice, which is from God, but his Will stands strongly bent for the propagation and spreading of it in the world. *I am come* (saith Christ) *to send, (or, cast) fire on the earth: and what WILL I, (or, what is my desire, as the former translation had it) if it be already kindled?* meaning, that his desire to see the Gospel on foot, to see it well taken, and sufficiently rooted in the world, was so great, that when hee once saw it, hee cared not how soon hee left the world. So Luke 22. 15. *And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer:* meaning, that he even longed to erect and found that great Ordinance of the Supper, for the use and benefit of the world in after times, before hee left the world. Many other Scriptures there are that speak this over and over, viz. that the heart and soul of God are firmly and deeply set within him, to have such Wayes, Doctrines and Ordinances as come from him, published, maintained, preached, and held forth unto the world. Therefore they who engage themselves with all their strength, and all their might, to resist

Reason 1.

Luke 12. 49.

list this will of his in the accomplishment of it, what do they else but fight against God?

Reason 2.

Secondly, Hee that magnifies himself to suppress, quash, or keep down any Way, Practice or Counsell which is from God, proportionably opposeth the glory of God, and doth what in him lies, to keep God from being magnified in the hearts and lives of men, at least as far as that Way, Practice or Counsell which hee seeks to suppress, tends to such a magnification of him. And will this, being weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuary, be found any whit lighter, then a fighting against God? Certain it is, that God hath (as it were) a stock of glory in the hand of every Way, Doctrine and Practice, which hee recommends unto the World; yea, in all and every of these, he hath a peculiar designe for the exaltation of his Name. The *beauty of the Lord* is said to be seen, or to be beheld in the Wayes and Ordinances of his *House*, or *Temple*. *Psal. 27. 4.* There is no Way or Truth of God, but carries an impression in it of some lineament or other of the glory and loveliness of his face. So again, *Psal. 67.* The Prophet having (*ver. 1.*) petitioned that at the hand of God, which (*ver. 2.*) might make his *Way* to be known on earth, &c. he breaks out (*ver. 3.*) in this propheticall strain; *Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee*; clearly implying, that the *Way of God* being published, and made known to the World, is that which increaseth the Revenues of the Throne of Heaven, raiseth and procureth new contributions of praise and glory from men unto God. So then hee that shall rise up to oppose the God of Heaven in any of those methods, counsels or projections of his, whereby hee projects the exaltation and advancement of his own great Name and Glory in the World, may in as proper a sense, as the phrase lightly will bear, be said to fight against God; especiall, if we consider but this one thing further: that Gods glory is his darling, his *unica*, his only one, (as *David* call'd his life, *Eripe à gladio animam meam, à cane unicum meum*, *Psal. 22. 21.*) it is the only life in which he lives in the world; it is the only apple that his soul careth to eat of, out of that great Orchard which he planted (I mean the World.) Therefore doubtlesse, hee that shall oppose him in his gathering of this fruit, hath the greater sin.

Reason 3.

Thirdly, (and lastly) there is in every thing that proceeds or derives

rives its originall or being from another, somewhat of the nature, property, or spirit of that, from which it takes this rise or spring of its being : there is somewhat of the father in the childe, of the root in the fruit, and in the branches, &c. In like manner, in every Way, Doctrine, or Practice which is from God, there is somewhat of God himself. The very substance, frame and constitution of them, at least, that which is operative, quickning and spirituall in them; what is it but a kinde of heavenly compolution, the ingredients whereof are the holiness, wisdom, mercy, goodness and bounty of God? And what are these and every of them, but God himself? Every Ordinance or Way of God, is (as it were) a benigne constellation of these stars unto the world; out of the midst of which he gives a gracious aspect of himself, and communicates those sweete and rich influences of himselfe, light, and life, and strength, and peace, and joy, unto the world. It is said, (1 King. 19. 11.) that the Lord neither was in the *strong wind that rent the mountains*, nor yet in the *earthquake* that followed it, nor in the *fire* that came after that; but after these there came a *still voyce*, wherein it is implied, that the Lord was. The meaning is, that God had neither prepared or intended, either the wind, earthquake, or fire, by, or out of which to impart himself unto his Prophet *Elijah*, he had only prepared and sanctified the *still and soft voyce* for such a purpose as this; and therefore he is expressly denied to have been in any other, and consequently supposed to have been in this. In such a sense or manner, as God was in this *still voyce*, he is in every Way, Doctrine, and Ordinance of his; in, by, and out of all and every of these, he communicates and imparts himself graciously unto the world. Therefore whosoever shall fight against any of these, by seeking to supplant, suppress, or keep them down, that they may not *run and be glorified* in the world, what do they else, let this work and course of theirs be truly interpreted, but fight against God himself?

We have done with the Reasons of the Doctrine; we shall conclude with somewhat by way of Use and Application.

First, by way of Instruction: If to attempt the suppression or keeping down any Way, Doctrine or Practice which is from God, be of no lesse concernment, of no safer interpretation, then a fighting against God, then certainly it is the greatest imprudence

or improvidence under heaven, for any man, or rank of men whatsoever, to appear, especially in any high-handed opposition or contestation against any Way, Doctrine, or Practice whatsoever, untill they have proof upon proof, demonstration upon demonstration, evidence upon evidence; yea, all the security that men in an ordinary way (at least) are capable of, that such Wayes or Doctrines only pretend unto God as the Author them, and that in truth, they are not at all from him, but either from men, or of a baser parentage. For what do men by such a practice and engagement of themselves as this, but run an apparent hazard, of dashing their foot against that stone, at which *Paul* stumbled, (when time was) yea, and without the highest hand of mercy that was ever lift up to save a mortall man, had been utterly broken to pieces by it? *It is a hard thing for thee* (saith the Lord by a voyce from heaven to him) *πρὸς κέρτος λυμίζω, to kick* or dash thy self against sharp goads or nails, made of Steel or Iron, (for so the word signifies) meaning, that his undertaking, or setting himself with such violence, to suppress that Way which Christ had a purpose to advance and set up in the world, was an enterprise of the worst and most grievous consequence and portendence to him, in the nature of it, that ever he could have lift up either heart, or head, or hand unto. *Who ever hath been fierce against him* (saith *Job*, speaking of God) *and hath prospered?* *Job* 9. 4. He that is fierce against any Way or Doctrine which is from God, makes a covenant with sorrow and trouble, which is like to stand. And (to make the best of such a doubtfull and blind ingagement) put the case that that Way or Doctrine, which men shall prosecute with so much violence and fierceness of spirit, shall in conclusion be found to have been mistaken, erroneous, and not from God: yet,

1. In this case men shall but offer the sacrifice of fooles, a kinde of sacrifice; wherewith God is not delighted. The *Athenians* worshipped the true God, as appears by those words of the Apostle unto them, *Act*. 17. 23. *Whom ye then ignorantly worship, him shew I unto you*; and yet were Idolaters notwithstanding. The same Apostle bears record unto his Countrymen the *Jews*, *That they had the zeale of God*; but this zeale of theirs not being according to knowledge, in the prosecution of it, they neither pleased God, and were contrary to all men, forbidding the Apostles to preach unto the Gentiles, that they

Acts 9.

Rom. 10. 2.

they might be saved, to fulfill their sins alwayes; because wrath was come upon them to the uttermost, 1 Thes. 2. 15, 16. The beast under the Law, though it were a first-born, yet was not to be sanctified or offered unto the Lord, if it were either lame, or blind, Deut. 15. 19, 21. Nor was any man, though of *Aarons seed*, admitted to serve at the Altar, that had any blemish or imperfection of blindness on him, Levit. 21. 17, 18. God regards no mans zeale without knowledge, though it should pitch and fasten upon things never so agreeable unto his Will: nor doth he care that his enemies themselves should be destroyed, but upon lawfull triall and conviction.

Secondly, whatsoever Doctrine or Way is recommended and tendered unto men in the Name of God, whether either the one or the other be from God or no, yet he expects from men (as well he may) that reverence and regard unto that great Name of his, wherein such things are brought and tendered unto them, that they should be diligently considered, and due prooffe and examination made, whether they be from him, or no, before they be rejected, and much more before opposed. And certainly men do but pollute and prophane that ever-blessed Name of God, by making refuse, yea, abomination (as many do) of such things as are brought unto them in that Name, before they know upon any considerable grounds or terms of knowledge, whether the things be indeed from God or no; yea, though the things thus rejected, should at last be found worthy of no better entertainment, as having no agreement with God or his Word. The event or issue in this case, though it should fall out to be the best for such men, will very little ease or qualifie their sin. Shall not that wicked tyrant and enemy of God, *Eglon*, rise up in judgement, and condemne that generation of men we now speak of, who, when *Ehud* only signified that he had a message from God unto him, did not presently reject the message before he knew it, or fall foul upon the Messenger, but (as the Text saith, *Judg. 2. 20.*) arose up from his Throne, addressing himself in that deportment of Reverence to receive it?

Thirdly, (and lastly) It is extreme madness in men, to run the hazard we speak of, I mean, of fighting against God, in seeking to suppress such wayes or courses as they are not able to demonstrate, but that they are Wayes of God indeed, because, in case they be not the Wayes of God, he himself will give testimony from Heaven a-

gainst them in due time, hee will suppress and scatter them, and bring them to nought; and then there will be no danger for men to reject and abhorre them. *Dearely beloved* (saith the Apostle, *Rom. 12. 19.*) *avenge not your selves, but give place unto wrath, i. unto the wrath of God, whose just avenging hand is lift up against those that wrong you, and deal unjustly with you, and is ready to smite for your sakes; as it followeth: For it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord.* It were great folly in any man, to expose himself to the just offence and displeasure of God, by seeking to right himselfe in an angry and revengefull manner upon him, whom he certainly knowes hath injur'd him, God himself being ready with the stroke of justice to do him right, and to avenge him on his adversary, though he himself should be patient and sit still. But it would be a point yet of seven-times greater folly then so, for a man to fall foul in a way of revenge upon an imaginary adversary, and who (at most) can only be supposed or suspected to have done him wrong, considering that God who is an infallible discernor and Judge of injuries and wrongs, and withall a just Avenger of all such things, will shortly appeare for his full vindication, in case he hath been wronged indeed. Nor hath any man cause in this case to feare, lest, *whilst the grasse grows, the steele should starve*, (as the Proverb is) I mean, that the person injured, whether really, or in supposition only, should suffer losse, by *possessing his soul in patience*, untill the day of Divine recompence and vengeance shall come. For God certainly will give full and ample consideration for all forbearance and long-suffering of men, wherein, and whereby the rights of his Throne are tendered and maintained. It were no lesse then an exaltation of folly in any man, to expose his own life to the stroke of justice, by assaulting the life of a malefactor whilst he is going to execution.

Again, secondly, (by way of Instruction) If to attempt the destruction or suppression of any Doctrine, or Way, which is from God in so high and peremptory a manner, as was formerly expressed, be a *fighting against God*; take we knowledge from hence also, what sin by name in all likelihood (at least) and with highest pregnancy of conjecture, it is, which ever and anon thus separates between God and us, which still troubles our proceedings, and makes the Sun of our peace to go so often backwards in the

Heavens

Heavens thereof. Is there not a *fighting against God* amongst us, as well as a fighting for him? And do wee not pull down by the one, what we build up by the other? Are not the hearts, and the heads, and the hands of far the greatest part of men amongst us, ingaged, and that to the highest of all bitterness, hatred, and enmity, against that *Way* of ordering the things of Gods worship, and of governing his Churches and Saints, which hath been, and still is, held forth in his Name unto this Nation, by some Ambassadors and Messengers of his, of a very choyce anointing, and indued with strength from on high, (many of them) as it were on purpose to stand by some such *Way* or counsell of God, untill it had throughly taken the hearts, and judgements, and consciences of men; besides many thousands more, and those (for the most part) of the best and choycest servants of God amongst us? Is not this *WAY* blasphemed and spoken against; yea, is not the destruction and ruine of it, with the grinding of the faces and breaking of the bones, with the suppression and crushing of those that hold it forth unto us, consulted, studied, and attempted by some that would be thought Pillars and prime men in the House and Temple of God? And have they not a great vote of the generality of people, who know little of God, or his Wayes, concurring with them, to strengthen their hand herein? May we not say of this *WAY*, as the *Jews* sometime said unto *Paul*, concerning the Doctrine of Christ which he preached, with those that professed it; *We know that this Sect is every where spoken against?* Act. 28. 22. So then in case it ever shall appear, or be found to be a *WAY* of God, we are in a *Premunire* for the present, and have forfeited our peace, help and comfort in God, as touching deliverance from our present dangers and miseries, by this our *fighting against him*. I presume you will all readily acknowledge and confesse, that if there be such a sin ruling and reigning amongst us, as *fighting against God*, this of all other, is like to be the *Achan*, the Troubler of our *Israel*; that betrays our armies, our faithfull and valiant men into the hands of their and our enemies, and that makes us ever and anon, retrograde in our motions and tendencies towards rest and peace. *Who ever hath hardened himself against him* (saith *Job*, as wee heard before) *and prospered?* If this be but granted, it is enough to demonstrate our case and condition to be very dangerous and doubtfull, at the best:

For

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Act. 28. 22.

Job 9. 4.

For

For whether that *WAY* we speak of, which is so generally troden and trampled upon like clay and mire in the streets, as well by the foot of ignorance and prophanesse, as of learning and better accomplishment, be the *WAY* of God, or no; most certaine it is, that all the wit, wisdom, parts, learning, judgement, that have encountered and opposed it hitherto, have not been able by any demonstrative, or concluding proof, to overthrow that title or claim which it maketh unto God as the Author and Founder of it. Therefore unto me it is a thing of the saddest consideration under heaven, and of more grievous portendance unto us, then any thing else, (as far as I am able to discern) that we should hang the great weight of the peace and safety of a whole Nation, all our hopes and expectations of help and assistance from God in our greatest extremities, upon the brittle pin of so doubtfull a disputation, as that which is maintained, and yet depending, between the one *WAY* and the other. For in case that *WAY* against which the spirits of men are so generally and fiercely bent, shall at last be found to be the *Way* of God, we are all this while look'd upon from heaven as *fighters against God*, and so have as good as given hostages to our enemies, that wee never mean to prosper, or do any great thing against them. Whereas, if men would but follow *Gumaliels* counsel in the Text, and refrain themselves for a season from laying either violent hands, or tongues upon this *Way*, untill God had either untied, or cut the knot, till he had given sentence against it, the *doubtfulnesse* of the *disputation*, need not, would not be prejudiciall in the least, either to our present proceedings, or future peace: and men do but make themselves *wise above that which is written*; yea, above that which is either *Reason* or *Faith*, to think, or speak otherwise.

If it be objected, that Reformation suffers and loseth time, because that *Way* is not yet hedg'd up with thornes, but men are suffered to walk in it.

I answer, First, If the *Way* be one of those *VVayes* which call God Father; Reformation indeed suffers, and loseth time, but not because this *way* is not hedg'd up with thorns, but because it is not laid more open, because it is not repaired and made more passable by the favour and countenance of men in place, whether Ministers or others; that so the people of God, whose hearts are towards it, may walk therein without feare.

2. That

2. That reformation (so called) which is the apple of so many eyes, and the joy of so many hearts, needs suffer nothing, nor lose an hours time, though the *Way* we speak of, be occupied in peace by those, whose feet by the light of Gods Word and Spirit (at least as they conceive) are guided into it. For what doth the poor Flie sitting on the top of the wheel to hinder the Waggoner from driving on his way? If the residue of the Nation be subjected to this Reformation, the Nation it self may be said to be reformed (according to such a denomination, as this Reformation will afford) notwithstanding such a number of persons (comparatively so inconsiderable, I mean, as touching their * number) as adhere to this *Way*, be not concluded in it. During the regency of Prelaticall extravagancy, there were many Non-conformists; yea, severall Congregations of people in the Land, who openly disclaimed and protested against that government; and yet the Nation was look'd upon as Episcopally reformed, notwithstanding. The irregularity of the mountains and valleys in the surface of the earth, troubles no-mans opinion concerning the perfect roundnesse of it, because it is swallowed up into victory by the vastnesse of the globe. *John* saith, that *this whole world lieth in wickednesse*, notwithstanding a remnant who were born of God. The gleanings of Independency (so called) will not hinder the vintage of Presbytery.

* In severall populous towns in the Low-Countries, scarce every 5th, nay, not every 8th person (as I have been credibly informed) is immembred into any of their Churches, and yet the government of the Nation is reputed Presbyteriall.

¹ Joh. 5. 19.

3. If a complete Nationall Reformation be indeed the Garland or Crown that is contended for, let but *Presbytery* bestir her self, and act her part within her Jurisdiction, with as much diligence, wisdom and faithfulness, as the *Congregational Way* will undertake to act hers amongst her Profelytes; and there will not be the least occasion to feare, but that the whole and entire body of the Nation will shine with the beauty and lustre of a perfect Reformation. If this *Way* shall be found tardy, or loose, and not to keep pace with her sister in carrying on the work of Reformation, even her enemies themselves being Judges, let her suffer; yea, let her with her children be cast out of doors. Therefore it is but a frivolous and putid slander cast upon her, when she is charged with enmity to Reformation: But,

4. (And lastly) I would gladly know, what, or what manner of Reformation can reasonably be expected, or hoped for, without her. Such a Reformation, as that whereby that Angel
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2 COR. 11. 14.

Matth. 21. 31.

Matth. 23. 15.

of darknesse, Satan is reformed, when he is transformed into an *Angel of light* (as the Apostle speaketh) is no reformation of desires: open loosenesse and prophanenesse reformed into Pharasaicall hypocrisie, brings in little to Religion. For what saith our Saviour of such a Reformation as this? *Verily I say unto you, that Publicans and Harlots go before you into the Kingdome of God.* If then such a Reformation as this should take place, it is much to be feared, that when the Genealogie of it shall be sought, it will be found to be of the house and linage of that Reformation, which the *Scribes and Pharisees* attempted in the world, when they compassed *Sea and Land* to make one *Proselyte*; and when he was made, they made him twofold more a *childe of hell*, then he was before; yea, then they were themselves; Or, what is the Reformation, wherein the *Way* wee speak of, cannot be admitt'd to have either part or fellowship? Will it take the members of an *Harlot*, and make them the members of *Christ*, whether either *Christ*, or such members themselves, will or no? Or will it undertake to reconcile darknesse with light, to settle a communion betwixt *Christ* and *Belial*, to throw down the partition wall, and make the *Wildernesse* of the world the *Garden of God*, the *Church* and the world enter-commoners? Or what is the glory or greatness of the design of it, that the Congregationall *Way* is counted unworthy to be so much as a *stander by*, and to behold it? Will it lift up its hand, to quash and crush, to break the hearts and bones of the one half of the most religiously affected, and best conscientised people in the Land, for trading in *Apes* and *Peacocks*, for holding some erroneous opinions (perhaps erroneously so called) as if it self were the Lord of infallibility, and had a *non esse* settled by God, as an inheritance upon it? I professe ingenuously, that when I put my self into a posture of the greatest indulgency I am able, to consider of the reformation so much spoken of, and even conflict with my spirit, to forme and cast the possible effects and fruits of it to the greatest advantage, I am not able to apprehend any thing desirable likely to come of it, either in respect of a *civill*, or religious accomodation unto the Nation, above what might be expected, and that upon terms of a far more promising hope, from the other *Way* which indureth so much contradiction from men. But I apparently foresee many inconveniences, and those not of a light or contemptible importance
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likely to attend it, for which no place would be found in the other *Way*. Particularly, it is to me in stead of all arguments and demonstrations, that no Reformation is according to the minde of God and of Jesus Christ, which is destructive to the edification of the Saints, and directly impeding their *growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*. And whether such a Reformation (if yet it be lawfull so to call it) which injoyes the Saints to sit under, and hold themselves to such Pastors, with whom their hearts cannot close in that relation with any tolerable satisfaction, nor yet are capable of his Ministry, or any edification by it, be not under that condemnation, I leave to men that have not sold themselves under partialitie, to judge and determine.

If it be said, but men shall have libertie to choose what Pastor they please, and to sit under what Ministry they desire, if they will but choose their dwellings accordingly. I answer:

1. There may be (and I beleeeve are) many of a rich anoynting from God for the work of the Ministry, and much desired by a considerable number of godly persons, in Pastorall relation, who must say their consciences nay, to accept of a Parochiall charge. In this case the change of a mans house will doe nothing towards the blessing of his soule; if such a Reformation, as most mens thoughts run upon, should be established.

2. All the dwellings within the Parochiall line, relating to the Pastor that is desired, may be fill'd with Inhabitants already; and so there is no place, or possibility (at least for the present) for him whose soule longeth after that Pastor, to enjoy him: and when, or whether ever whilst he liveth, the door now shut against him will be open, no man knoweth.

3. Many times the situation and conveniency of a mans present dwelling for trade, imployment, &c. is such, that he cannot remove, but at the perill of his estate, and ruining himselfe and his whole family. And how they, who shall compell men, either to sacrifice their peace, comfort, and subsistence in this present world, or else run the hazard of losing a subsistence in that which is to come, will answer it either before the righteous God, or reasonable men, is above my apprehension.

4. This liberty of choosing Pastors only by choosing houses, is so conditioned, that it smiles only upon the rich, (and that but some-
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what faintly neither) but frowns upon the poor; and so is partiall, and therefore not Christian. He that hath enough of that, which Eccles. 10. 19. (as Solomon saith) *answers all things*, may probably be able to accommodate himself within the precincts of what parish he pleaseth, in point of dwelling; as either by buying out some Inhabitant, or by purchasing ground, and building upon it, or the like; but the case of the poor man is many times such, that he cannot tell where to finde another hole in all the world to hide his head in, besides that wherein it is hid already. So that this liberty of choosing a Pastor, being nothing else, if plainly interpreted, but only a liberty of choosing such or such a Parish determinately to dwell in, is little better then a meer collusion, in respect of those that are poor, and (indeed) rather an upbraiding of them with their poverty, then any gratification of them with a liberty.

5. (And lastly) such a liberty as this we now speak of, were it more valueable then it is, is no gratuity, benefit or blessing of that Reformation so importunately demanded and pressed for by many, being nothing else, but what was every mans permission and enjoyment under the iron rod of Episcopall tyranny. I am more beholding to every man that comes neer me, for not taking away my life, then I am to any Reformation whatsoever, for giving me liberty to choose my Pastor upon such terms. This for answer in full to that undue charge against the Congregationall Way, wherein it was attained of inconsistency with, and enmity against Reformation.

A second objection levied against it, and all sufferance of it, by those that are adversaries to it, is, that if it be permitted quietly to walk up and down amongst us, and not be suppressed, it will soon make the Land unquiet, fill the Land with troubles, tumults, divisions, distractions, dissensions, discontents, confusions, in City, in Countrey, in relations, in families, and where not? To this also I answer.

1. That peremptorinesse and height of confidence in an accuser, is no signe at all of reality or truth in the accusation. *Wee know* (say the Jews concerning Christ) *that this man is a sinner*, Joh. 9. 24. And again, Job. 8. 48. *Say wee not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devill?* And yet for all their knowledge, and confidence of well-speaking, the Lord Christ was never the more either a *Sinner*,
or

John 9. 24.

or a *Samaritan*, or had a *Devill*. The Way we speak of, is never the nearer the guilt of those things that are charged upon it, because her accusers bewray so little tenderneſſe or hesitancy in drawing up their charge.

2. Nor is the tragicall dresse or pointed stile of an accusation any demonstrative proof of a guilt commensurable thereunto; no, nor yet of any proportion or degree of guilt at all. Want of crime and delinquency, either in things or persons, which are accused, many times makes a greater noyse in the accusation, then a reality or fulneſſe of guilt would do. Innocency hath begotten the rankest and fiercest accusations that ever were managed by the tongues or pens of men. *Thou lovest all devouring words* (said *David*) *O thou deceitfull* (or, false) *tongue*. They that accuse either upon knowledge or feare of little or no guilt in the accused, still labour to lay on accusation enough, lest nothing otherwise should be beleaved by the Judge. That mount of accusation which is raised so high against the *Way* we now maintain, doth not at all prove that there is any thing in it that deserves battery.

Psal. 62. 4.

3. There is no substantiall reason at all can be given, why this *Way* should occasion troubles, divisions, discontents, or the like, above the rate of that other *Way*, which so much magnifies it selfe against it; except (haply) this, that it hath more of God and Christ in it, then that other: and then it is no marvell if it be more offensive, and troublesome to the world. But suppose both equally interested in this, I affirm and undertake to demonstrate, that in the nature, frame; and constitution of it otherwise, it is every whit as gentle, sweet, complying and accomodating, and no whit more threatening or portending troubles or distractions, then the other; yea, that in all such considerations as these, it hath the preheminance: For,

1. It seeketh not, it attempteth not the molestation, harm, or disturbance of any sort of men that are contrary-minded to it; it thinketh no evill, it speaketh no evill of such: if it conceives them upright and faithfull with God and Jesus Christ, it imbraceth them with all love, tenderneſſe and honour, as *partakers of like precious faith* with it self; and nothing doubts, but that they serve and worship God with as much sincerity and singleneſſe of heart, and are accordingly accepted by him in their *Way*, as it selfe.

2. If God should please to give it favour in the eyes, and interest in the hearts of the powers of this world, it thinks it very un-Christian and unworthy, to arme it selfe with this interest, to fight against the peace of the consciences of other men. If any of this *Way* have miscarried in any of these particulars, they have done it as men, and not as children of this *Way*; the principles of their *Way* taught them better things. And why, or how a *Way*, baptized into no worse, or harder spirit then this, should come to be arraigned, as a troubler of State, or strife-maker, a dissention-breeder amongst men, except it be by a spirit of contention and strife indeed, is to me a thing incomprehensible. Nevertheless, it is no new thing, that both the wayes and servants of God should be charged with such crimes and demerits, not onely whereof they are wholly innocent and free, but which have a speciall contrariety to some such grace or vertue, wherein they have a remarkable and choice preheminance above others. Thus *Joseph*, the great mirrour of chastity, was accused of Adultery, *Gen.* 39. *Moses*, the meekest man upon earth, of ambition, and self-assuming, *Numb.* 16. *Elijah* of being the troubler of *Israel*, *1 King.* 18. who was the Chariot and Horse-men of *Israel*, to defend it, *2 King.* 2. The Lord Christ himselfe, in whom the God-head dwelt bodily, of having a Devil, *Job.* 8. and so of being an enemy unto *Cesar*, when as it was, and is he, by whom *Kings* reign; with many the like. Therefore however it may seem strange that a *Way* of God, which is eminently set, strongly bent, and (in a manner) every wayes calculated for peace, should suffer in the tongues and thoughts of men as a disturber of States, and sower of dissentions amongst men, yet is there nothing in this, but what hath been acted, and that over and over upon the Theatre of the world formerly.

If it be here replied and said; Yea, but experience riseth up, and confirms the truth of that accusation and charge against the *Way* you speak of, which you would wipe off; this shews and proves against all deniall and exception, that where your *Way* is entertained, Congregations are torn, families rent, relations distanced and divided, &c.

I answer, first, that *Aristotle* long since observed, that *μετα' τὸ το, οἱ* *δια' τὸ το*, was a very frequent Paralogisme or mistake amongst men, nothing is more ordinary then for men to range consequents and effects

effects under one & the same notion, especially where the disproportion of causality is not very notorious and broad. A man in reason can hardly think, that any man, *compos mentis*, (as we use to say) should be so defective or weak in his intellectualls, as to think that the building of *Tenderton Steeple*, should be the cause of *Goodwins Sands*, only because these sands were never known to be before the building of that Steeple; yet old *Mr. Latimer* relates the Story in one of his Sermons, and improves it to very good purpose: By such a form of arguing as this, *Judas* his betraying his Master, should have been the effect of the womans powring out *that box of oyntment upon his head*, mentioned *Mat. 26. 7.* For he never betrayed him untill this oyntment was powred out upon him; and immediately after, he did. The *Way* we speak of, is never the more any cause of troubles, dissensions, or divisions, because troubles, dissensions and divisions, many times follow upon the embracement and entertainment of it.

2. If troubles or divisions were the proper effects of this *Way*, then the more, and more generally it were taken up and practised in a familie, Citie, or Countrey, the more troubles and divisions there would be. Effects are still found in proportion to their causes, where nothing interposeth to hinder it. But where it is generally assented and submitted unto, whether in families, relations, or otherwise, there is as much unitie, love, and peace, (as touching matter of government) as where *Presbyterie* hath its highest throne. Therefore the reason why troubles and divisions sometimes accompany it, is not because it is intertained, but because it is not intertained sufficiently, or with that generalitie of consent, which is desireable.

3. When troubles and divisions are occasioned in relations, families, Congregations, &c. by the meeting together of two opposite wayes, why should the one *way* be still burthened and charged with the occasion of such troubles, and the other acquitted, there being no ground or reason at all, why either that which is acquitted, should be judged more innocent; or that which is charged, more obnoxious or peccant, in this kind. Nay,

4. If matters were duly and fairely examined between the two Combatants in this case, the *Way* we plead for, would be found *via lactea*, the candid, harmlesse, and peaceable *way*: and her cor-
rivall

Prov. 13. 10.

rivall or competitresse, *via sanguinea*, the trouble and strife-making way. Onely by pride (saith Solomon) cometh contention. Surely that way which commandeth homiage and subjection unto her from all her fellowes, and threatens to breake them all in pieces like a potters vessell with a rod of iron, if they will not bow, and deny themselves for her sake, is the way of *pride*, and so of *contention*, (according to *Solomons Logique*) not that which is gentle, and easie to be entreated by all others, claiming no superioritie or jurisdiction over any. If there be any clashing or unkindnesse between the two wayes, *Independency* (so called) and *Presbyterie*, when they meet together, either in a relation, familie, &c. the very complexion of the latter bewrayes that to be still the foundresse of the quarrell. To me it is a wonder of the first magnitude, how men come to have so much ground of hope as to set their foot upon, of composing differences and distractions, of settling peace and love throughout the Nation, by exalting one way of Discipline, of Church-Government, for the treading downe and trampling under foot all others. If *Ephraim* be against *Manasseh*, is it any wayes like but that *Manasseh* will be against *Ephraim*? And God himselfe prophesying of *Ismael*, told his mother, that he would be a *wild man*: and that his hand should be against every man; and every mans hand against him. Undoubtedly that way, whose hand shall be against every way, will find that the hand of every way will be against it: and then what manner of peace can reasonably be expected under the predominancy of such a way? That way which shall be able to *out-reason*, not that which shall *out-chubbe* all other wayes, will at last exalt unitie, and be it selfe exalted by gathering in all other wayes unto it. *Solomon* tells us, that all that is *taken in hunting*, is not alwayes *raised*; and that an *inheritance may be hastily gotten*, and yet the end thereof not be *blessed*: and the Prophet *Habakkuk* denounceth a *woe* against him that shall build a towne with *blond*. But,

Prov. 12. 27.

Prov. 20. 21.

Hab 2. 12.

5. I would gladly know what the plaintiffe in the objection means, by distractions, rents, divisions, in relations, families, Congregations, &c. If he means onely this, that the father goes to heare one Minister in one place, and the son another Minister, in another, and that some within the same parochiall line goe to this Minister, or are members of this Church, others to another Minister, and are members of another Church, and the like, &c. I answer,

swer, That in this case, I know no more occasion, (at least no more necessitie) of any distraction, rent, or division, then when the father being free of one Company, as suppose of Merchant-taylors, shall still upon occasion of the meeting of this Company, repaire to the hall belonging to it; and the son being free of another, as perhaps of the company of Grocers, shall upon the like occasion repaire to the hall appertaining to them. Who knows not that the members of all the severall Companies in London, dwell scatteringly and promiscuously up and downe the Citie, with the greatest irregularitie of intermixture that lightly can be, and without any observation of their relations to their respective Companies, sundry members of twenty severall Companies (it may be) inhabiting within one and the same parish; and yet without any complaint or inconvenience of *rents, distractions, or divisions*? Or if by *rents, distractions, and divisions*, he means distances or alienations in affections; nor can these with any face of reason be charged upon that *way*; whose cause we plead; because it is a maine principle and maxime in this *way*, to hold terms of love and Christian correspondence, with all persons of what judgement soever in point of Government, if they be godly, as well as with her owne children (as hath in effect been argued formerly.) But in this case the Roman proverb (it seems) must be verified; *Æmilius fecit, plectitur Ruilius*. Or 3. (and lastly) if by *rents, distractions, &c.* he means, the shaking or troubling of mens judgements, raising doubts or scruples in mens consciences concerning the way they went peaceably in before: I answer, 1. That if they were built upon sure and cleere foundations in their former way, there is not the least ground or reason why they should be troubled or shaken in their judgements; because they see another *way* acted and practised by others: or 2. if they were but at peradventure in their former way, and it was not the knowledge, but the ignorance of the truth, that both put them into it, and kept them in it, they have no cause to complaine of being awakened out of so sinfull and dangerous a sleep, though it were never so sweet and pleasing to them. But,

6. (and lastly) Suppose that all which the objection chargeth upon the *way* we speake for, be granted for truth, that *where this Way comes and is entertained, Congregations are to the families rent, relations distanced, &c.* Yet this maketh much more for it, then against

Luk. 12. 51.
&c.

gainst it ; because such figures and characters as these , are the knowne impressions of the Gospel upon the world, where it comes in power, and is entertained in truth. *Thinke yee (saith our Saviour) that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, nay, but rather debate. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father : the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother : the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.* Nor is it to be conceived that these *divisions* in relations and families, foretold by Christ, as the common and ordinary effects and consequents of the Gospel (for in different respects they may be either) are to be limited onely to such either relations or families, wherein the ground or occasion of the division should be , the receiving of the Gospel in the maine truth and substance of it by the one partie, the other partie absolutely rejecting it , as if they were onely to take place in such cases as this; but they are to be extended to such both families and relations also , where some particular and speciall points or truths of the Gospel are intertained by one partie, and rejected by another, though both agree as well in the believe, as in the Profession of the Gospel in the generall. Experience shews that *rents & divisions* take place in both, as well, yea, and that with as much heat and distemper of affection, in the latter case and upon the latter occasion, as in the former. Now if the question in this latter case be, Whether the occasion of the division be rather to be imputed to the truth held and practised by the one partie, or to the error held and practised in opposition to the truth, by the other : The answer is, that where all were before bound up in unity and peace, by a common band of error , there the occasion of the division must needs be imputed unto the truth comming amongst them. Therefore were it granted , that the way so much contested against, did indeed occasion, *rents, divisions, distractions*, in relations, in families, in Congregations where it comes, this would rather *turne into* it for a testimony, and assert its originall from God, then otherwise : The Gospel it, selfe works no otherwise then thus, where it is preached and intertained. And as *Aristotle* supposeth, that in case any piece or fragment were broken off from the maine body of the Heavens, it would move circularly,

ly, according to the naturall motion of the maine body; in like manner any particular opinion or practise which moves, acts, and works, according to the manner and tenor of that motion, acting, and working, which are genuine and proper to the Gospel, is so much the more likely to be a parcell or branch of the Gospel: but however, such a moving, acting, and working as this, can with no semblance or colour of reason, be drawn into any contrary interpretation, or be made an argument of the non-conformitie of it unto the truth.

A third objection against that way whose condemnation outruns her triall day and way, in the world, is; that it opens a doore to all errors, heresies, and unsound opinions, yea to all loosenesse and prophanenesse, and consequently it cannot but be a thing displeasing unto God, and so prejudiciall to the peace and safetie of the Nation, if it should be tolerated, or practised amongst us. But to these things also full and clear answers are not wanting. For,

First, it being certain that error cannot be healed or suppressed but by the manifestation of the truth, as darknesse cannot be destroyed or removed but by the shining of the light; that way which affords the greatest advantages and the best encouragements unto men, both for the searching out, and bringing forth into light the truth being found, must needs be so farre from opening doores unto errors, heresies, unsound opinions, &c. that it steers the most advantagious and hopefull course that lightly can be taken, for the evicting, and consequently for the suppression of them. I need not adde, that it is the congregationall way (and this onely amongst all its fellows) that rejoyceth in the method of this warfare and advance, against those enemies of God, and Religion, errors and heresies. And,

Secondly, for the way fir-named *Presbyterian*, which conjures all mens gifts, parts, and industrie into a synodickall circle, and suffers them onely to dance there, as it may possibly shut the doores against some errors and heresies, which were not like to stay long, in case they should enter under the other way; so it is in every whit as much possibilitie and danger, of shutting the doore upon, and compelling such errors and heresies as are already gotten in, and otherwise have a mind to be gone, to stay

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by it, and so to infest and annoy the truth, and peace of the Churches of Christ, against their wils. But,

Thirdly, I would gladly learn of the sons of this objection, how, which way, or in what respect the *way* so much objected against, commits this folly-deed of opening a doore unto errors and heresies. Certain I am, first, that this *way* hates both the one and the other with as *perfect an hatred*, as her competitresse doth. Secondly, I fully beleieve, that this *way* is as diligent, faithfull, and industrious to slay these enemies of Christ by *the sword of the Spirit*, (which is in speciall manner consecrated for such executions) as the other way. Thirdly, if the error be dangerous, amounting to, or neer an heresie, after two or three admonitions (that is, according to her warrant from Heaven) she casts it out of the line of her communication, unto him who cast it in (I mean, Satan.) If to hate errors and heresies, to preach with all diligence and faithfulness against errors and heresies, to excommunicate errors and heresies, be to open a doore unto error and heresies, then must the adversaries of the *way* whereof we speak, be justified in their accusation of her: otherwise they speak at the utmost perill of their reputations, when they lay such things to her charge.

If it be here replied and said; Yea, but all this notwithstanding, the *way* you plead for, is but feeble-handed, for the suppression of errors and heresies; because these, though hated, preach'd against, and cast out of the Church by excommunication, may yet live and gather head again in the world, except error and errant be further restrained by a secular hand, and heresie and heretique put to silence together in the grave. And this, which is the most, if not the onely effectuell means to preserve the wheat from those tares, the *way* of your desires exerciseth not, nor yet approveth.

I answer: first, we presume that *Prisons* and *Swords* are no *Church-officers*, nor any appurtenances to any Ecclesiastique authority in what form of Government soever.

Secondly, we suppose that the Lord Christ so far tendered the spirituall safety and peace of his Churches, as to leave them sufficiently furnished, and every wayes appointed with internall provisions, for the effectuell procurement and preservation of them

them, without any concurrence of any heterogeneall or external power. Especially considering, that he fore-saw, that these Churches of his, for the space of three hundred yeers together, and somewhat more (during which terme he knew likewise that they would continue in their greatest puritie, and perfection of love and loyaltie towards him) were not like to have any accommodation at all in this kind from any secular or civill power.

Thirdly, though the Churches of Christ, during this period of time wherein they had no comportsance with any secular arm for their preservation either in this or any other kind, were not wholly free from errors and heresies; yet did they quit and defend themselves against the danger spreading and troublesomenesse of them upon better terms, and with farre better successe, then they were able to do afterwards, when they had an arme of flesh and a sword in it, to assist them. Note this.

Fourthly, if persons delivered up unto Satan by the Church, whether for Error, Heresie, or other crime, were presently to be cut off by the secular Sword, all opportunitie for the effectuall and saving work of that ordinance of Christ upon the persons so delivered up, would be cut off also. The Apostle, *1 Corinth. 5. 5.* expressly affirms the end of Excommunication or *delivering up unto Satan*, to be the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. And *1 Tim. 1. 20.* he saith, that he had delivered Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan, that they might learn not to blasphemize. Now as naturall medicines and physicall receipts, must have a time to work, before they can in an ordinarie course of providence produce their most proper and desired effects; in like manner the ordinances and means which the Lord Christ hath graciously appointed for the everlasting salvation of the precious souls of men, must, according to the nature and condition of their respective workings, and the tenor of Gods providence observed for the time of his falling in with them to make them effectuall, have their full and just allowance of time given and permitted unto them, to work upon men effectually. And whosoever shall limit or straiten the providence of God, in this kind, by any hasty or violent taking away a soul from under the influence and working of any ordinance of Christ appointed for his salvation, before the blessed work of

Matth. 20. 6.

Repentance be accomplished in him, will be arraigned before the tribunal of the living God, as accessarie to the blood of that soul, except he can shew a better warrant from God for such an action, then I know any. And God himself having no where prescribed or limited any determinate or set time, within which he intends to make the sentence of Excommunication after the passing of it by the Church, effectually to the saving of the soul, or otherwise never to do it, I conceive it can be no lesse then an act of high presumption in any man to undertake any such prescription or limitation. As God by the voice of the Gospel calls some at the third and sixth houre; so he calls others at the ninth, and some at the eleventh houre: and why may he not work savingly, by the sentence of Excommunication with as much libertie, and difference in respect of time? And this sentence being the last and utmost means which God is like to afford a poore hardened, impenitent soul for the eternall peace and salvation of it, how can it but be conceived an act most unworthy of Christian bowels, to cut him off from this also, whilst God is pleased to spare him? If it be here objected and said, But if an heretique be suffered to live, he is in danger of infecting others, and destroying them eternally. I answer; first, so is a drunkard, a fornicatour, a swearer, a covetous person, with the like; the lives of all these kinds of sinners are of as dangerous a consequence in respect of infecting, yea and of destroying the souls of others, as the life of an heretique is: and yet no man (I presume) judgeth this a sufficient ground why such men should be punished with death. Secondly, as for those that are within the Church, they are not capable of any communion or commerce with an Heretique that is cast out by Excommunication, and so are not in danger of being infected by him: and for those that are without, these are infected already with a disease every whit as mortall, as any heresie, I mean unbelief. So that infection with heresie, will not much impair the estates or conditions of these. Thirdly, (and lastly) the truth is, that an Heretique being dead (especially if punished with death for his opinion sake) speaketh in his surviving heresie with every whit as much authoritie, and consequently with every whit as much danger of infecting others therewith, as he could do if he were alive, if not with more. And so,

Fifthly,

Fifthly, (and lastly) concerning other civill means for the suppression and restraint of those spirituall evils, errors, heresies, &c. as imprisonment, banishment, interdictions, finings, &c. both reason and experience concur in this demonstration, that such fetters as these put upon the feet of errors and heresies to secure and keep them under, still have prov'd (and are like to prove no other, but) wings whereby they raise themselves the higher in the thoughts and minds of men, and gain an opportunity of a further and ranker propagation of themselves in the world. It was an observation of *Tacitus* long since, that *punitis ingenii gliscit auctoritas*; To punish men of parts and wit, is to cast a spirit of Authoritie upon them, and to make their reputation glowe. Men of ordinarie capacitie, and vulgar apprehension, are and ever will be inclinable to think, that men of wisdom and worth will never expose themselves to sufferings, but for that which is weightie, and which hath more in it, then every man seeth. And besides, men of better breed, may easily be twayed by such a principle as this, that wise men, whilst they have the advantage and odds of their adversaries in *reason*, will never renounce or disclaim this so honourable an advantage by calling in the more ignoble assistance of horn and hoof to their aid. It is true, when Christ was hand'ed with this rough hand we speak of, that piece of prophetic was verified; *I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*; but ordinarily the smiting of the Shepherd or head of any Sect or error, is the gathering together, yea the multiplication and increase, of his sheep. But

Fourthly (to the main objection last propounded) whereas the innocent way is condemned as opening a doore to all loosenesse and prophanenesse, she may justly take up *Dauids* complaint, and say, *Cruell witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not*. *Psal. 35. 11*. The very truth is, that this way, above all her fellows, is so farre from holding any intelligence or correspondence with loosenesse and prophanenesse, that her face is set to advance righteousness and true holiness in all her quarters. Her heart runs parallel with *Dauids* heart in those his meditations and vows, *Psal. 101. 3, 4. &c. I will see no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn*

aside: it shall not cleave to me. I will not know a wicked person. Who so privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high looke, and a proud heart, will I not suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithfull of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, shall serve me. He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarrie in my fight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the Citie of the Lord. This is such a draught and copie of Reformation as the Way we speake of (*mutatis mutandis*) emulates, and aspires unto. If David in those resolutions and practises mentioned, opened a doore to loose-nesse and prophane-nesse, then cannot she excuse her selfe from part and fellowship with him, in that sin.

It it be replyed and said; but this way taketh care for none in point of holinesse, but her own: she suffereth all the world about her to lie in wickednesse, and to sleep in death, without looking after them, or taking any pitie or compassion on them. To this also we answer in one word:

That she doth as tenderly, as affectionately desire and pray for, yea and with as much diligence and faithfulnessse, yea and prudence of endeavour otherwise, and likelihood of successe, attempts and seeks the salvation of those that sit in darknesse, and in the shadow of death, as any other way can do. It is true, she doth not judge it any wayes conducing towards the quickning of those that are dead in sins and trespasses, to put them into a conceit that they are living stones (whilest they are yet dead) by putting them into the building of the spirituall temple of God: she knows no such method or means of converting souls unto

1 Cor. i. 29. God, as this. Nor doth shee willingly suffer any man to eat and drink damnation unto himselfe, to further him in his salvation. Nor doth she make faith of apparent unbelief in parents, by baptizing their children, as any wayes accommodating the souls either of the one, or of the other. Therefore if shee declines such things as these, it cannot be argued from hence (except either ignorance, or a worse Logician, makes the syllogisme) that therefore she neglects or casts off all care of seeking the salvation of others; but onely this, that she thinks it no point either of wisdom or charitie to expose her selfe to the displeasure of God, by doing that

that, which is more like to expose others also to the same stroke, then any wayes to comfort or relieve them. But whatsoever she can reasonably conceive or judge to be a means any wayes likely to *save a soul from death, to translate men from darknesse unto life*, she girds herself to minister unto the world both farre and neer, in every such thing: She cordially prays for the conversion of the unconverted, she mourns over them, she causes *her light to shine before them*, she bears their burthens, she intreats them gently, she feeds their hungry, and cloatheth their naked (as she is able) she recompenceth evill for evill unto none of them, with all such exemplarities of life and conversation, which are sanctified, and appointed by God for the *winning of those without the Word*, who refuse to obey it. 1 Pet. 3. 1. And besides all this, (that which is the first-born means of conversion) she preacheth the Gospel with as much diligence, and faithfulness, and power, and with as much libertie and freedome unto all to partake with her in this her ministration, as any other way whatsoever: yea, as readie and forward she is as any other, to contribute her proportion to the full, whether in counsell, purse, or otherwise, for the furnishing of all the candlesticks in the land with burning and shining lights, I mean for the erecting and setting up a faithfull preaching Ministry throughout the Land; yea if it were possible, throughout the whole world. Therefore

Fifthly, (and lastly, to the main objection) whereas this way with the permission and sufferance of it, is burthened with this jealousie and fear, that it is so highly displeasing unto God; that he is not like to turn in mercie unto the Nation, untill it be removed, and all the factors for it taken away. I answer.

First, that this jealousie and fear is of the same inspiration, with that wherewith *Rabshakeb* of old, sought to possesse the heart of the good King *Hezekiah* and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that so upon the discouragement they might be the more willing to compound for their City. But if thou say to me, we trust Isa. 36. 7. in the Lord our God; is it not he whose high places, and whose altars *Hezekiah* hath taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ye shall worship before this altar? That which *Hezekiah* had done (in destroying Idolatry) with great acceptance in the sight of God, and which consequently was in it self a pledge and confirmation unto

Gen. 3. 5.

unto him and his people that God was and would be with them to save them and their Citie out of *Rahshakehs* hand, this doth this deceived ambitious man contrive into an argument of jealousy and fear unto them, that God was offended with them; and so represents their *hope and confidence*, in the shape of *diffidence* and deep *discouragement* unto them. He that perswaded the woman, that God knew how that *in the day wherein they should eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, their eyes should be opened, and they be like gods, &c.* hath (it seems) posselt many amongst us with this semblable apprehension, that from the day wherein they shall destroy that *way* we speak of out of the Land, and suppress all those that walk in it, God will be gracious unto them, and remember their iniquities no more; as if to sacrifice the children in the Fathers fight, were the onely means of making atonement with him. But

Secondly, how doth this carrie any shew or shadow of reason or truth in it, that God should turn away his face from a State or Nation, for not hating his people, or for refusing to persecute his anointed ones? God sometimes said, *That Nation whom they shall serve, I will iudge.* Gen. 15. 14. Is his mind so far altered in this point, that now he should say, *the Nation who shall give them libertie, I will iudge?* The generall rule of restraint which God hath charged upon States, Kingdoms, and Nations, is this: *Psal. 105. 15. Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm:* and hath he any where made *Independencie* (so called) an exception from this rule? or hath he any where made *Presbyterie* a distinguishing character of such of his anointed ones, who must not be touch'd, from others of them, who may be crush'd, and whose bones may be broken? Surely *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* differed as much, as *Presbyterie* and *Independencie* can do: yet the Apostle tells us, *Gal. 6. 15. that in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* If Independents be new creatures, and born of God, their Brethren need not fear any displeasure or anger from their Father, for suffering them to dwell in peace by them in the same Land; but have cause to rejoyce in such their neighbourhood and societie, as being pillars of the same strength with themselves, to support the State and Nation wherein they dwell. But

Thirdly,

Thirdly, (and lastly) when mens table becomes a snare unto them, *Pfal. 69. 22.*
and their welfare a trap, it is a signe that God is about to bow down *Ver. 25.*
their backs, if not to make their habitations desolate. When the Jews
began to reason after this manner, (and to act accordingly) If
we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and then the Ro-
manes shall come, and take away both our place and nation; it was a *Joh. 11. 48.*
prefage, that the Romanes indeed would come, and take away both:
which they did not many yeers after. Make the heart of this people
fat (saith the Lord by his Prophet, concerning the same people)
and make their eares heavie, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their *Isa. 6. 10.*
eyes, and hear with their eares, and understand with their heart, and
convert, and be healed. I say no more in this, but onely pray with
all mine heart, & with all my soul, that the people of this King-
dom, may see with their eyes, and hear with their eares, and under-
stand with their hearts, that they may convert, & be healed. The Hea-
thens were wont to say, Jupiter, quos vult perdere, dementiat.

Another objection leavied against the *Way* is this: If this way be let alone, and suffered to take place, it will still undermine the credit and comfort of many worthy and conscientious Ministers in the land. For as fast as they, through the blessing of God upon their faithfull labours in the work of the Ministry, shall convert souls unto God; this *Way* will allure them away from them unto it self; whereby their hand must needs be enfeebled and discouraged to their work. But to this also I answer.

First, that if that way of Government and worship, wherein those good Ministers shall walk, who are supposed to convert people unto God, be indeed and in truth the *way* of God, there is little ground or cause of fear, that any other way should separate between them and their converted ones. For first, the verie grace of conversion, being dispensed unto these by their hand, is a great and solemne ingagement upon them, to love and honour them above others. Secondly, the person being dearly lov'd, and highly honour'd, gives credit and interest both in the judgements and affections of those who do so love and honour, to all his matters, as well of opinion as practise; at least is compleat armour of proof against any prejudice in respect of either. Thirdly, when men and women are converted unto God, they are endued with a principle of a neerer and more inward sympathie and compliance with all the wayes of God, then they

had before. So that there is more cause for Ministers to fear the withdrawing of their people from them before their conversion, then after, in case the way of worship and government which they imbrace, be of God. For in this case and supposition, unconverted ones have no inward suitability of soul, to incline them to love or delight in this way, and consequently their hearts must needs be loose (if they stand not in opposition) to it: but those that are converted, are baptized into such a spirit, which is apt to comport and correspond with it. Again,

Secondly, if the hearts of men and women upon their conversion unto God, are so generally found (for otherwise there is no place for the jealousy, which is the ground of the objection) to stand in propension to this way, is not this an argument, if not demonstrative, yet of a very high importance to evince, that this way is of a truth the Way of God? *I will wait on thy Name* (saith David) *for it is good before thy Saints; or, because thy Saints like it well* (as another translation reads.) So that this great Prophet and King thought the generall approbation and concurrence of the Saints, sufficiently assertive of the acceptableness of a way or practise, in the sight of God.

Thirdly, those Ministers who have the spirit of this glory cast upon them by God, to beget sons and daughters unto him by the Gospel, have no cause to envie the line and measure of those who receive them from their hand; upon such terms. That which our Saviour spake in another case, is every whit as considerably true in this: viz. that it is a more blessed thing to give, then to receive: And the Apostle Paul makes no other account; but that his relation of a spirituall Father unto the Corinthians, his begetting of them by the Gospel, was much more honourable unto him, then the relation of an Instructor, or builder up, was; or would be unto others. For though you have ten thousand Instructors in Christ, (saith he) yet have ye not many Fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. And elsewhere he counts it a master-piece in the spirituall building, to lay the foundation. According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. So then, planting being more Apostolicall then watering (it was Paul that planted, and but Apollos that watered, 1 Cor. 3. 6.) and laying the foundations of life and immortality in men, of a more

Psal. 52. 9.

Act. 20. 35.

1 Cor. 4. 15.

1 Cor. 3. 10.

more honourable interpretation, then the building of them up in their Faith; the Ministers so much rendered in the objection, have not the least colour for any such grievance or complaint, as is there presented on their behalf; indeed and in realitie of truth no more, then the Apostles themselves had, for complaining against such Ministers and Pastors, who fed those flocks of Christ which they had first converted unto him. *And without all contradiction* (saith the Apostle) *the lesser is blessed, but never envied, of the greater.* Hebr. 7. 7.

Fourthly (and lastly) the gracious and bountifull God hath so laid it in his countell and decree, that, though the saying be true, which our Saviour taketh notice of, *Job. 4. 37. That one soweth, and another reapeth; yet both be that soweth, and be that reapeth, should reioyce together.* ver. 36. So that as Abigail told David, *that when the Lord should have done unto him all the good which he had promised him, it would be no grief unto him, nor offence of mind, that he had not shed blood, nor avenged himself;* no more will it be the least occasion of uncomfortableness or complaint unto Ministers, who have been faithful unto God, and brought home souls unto him, when *they shall shine like stars in the firmament of Heaven;* that some of the children of their labours departed from under their hand when time was, to seek pasture and soul-accommodations else-where. 1 Sam. 25. 30, 31.

Another objection seeming to war with an high hand against the way hitherto protected, is this: Can that in reason be thought to be the way of God, which seemeth so onely in the eyes of a few inconsiderable, and (for the most part) illiterate persons? and not rather that, which triumpheth in the vote and suffrage of a Reverend, learned, pious and frequent Assembly; yea and further hath the approbation of many wise and worthy persons in full concurrence with it? Do not wise men see more then those that are weak, and many, then few? Dan. 12. 3.

First, that *Solomon returned, and saw under the Sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battell to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but that time and chance happeneth unto them all;* meaning, that God still reserves a liberty to himself to interpose, and to carry the issues and events of things against all advantages and likelihoods of second causes, when and where and as oft as he pleaseth. Eccles. 9. 11.

2 Cor. 14. 11.

pleaseth. And therefore as King *Aſa* in his cry unto the Lord his God, ſaid, *It is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power*: in like manner it is but of one and the ſame conſideration with God, to bleſſe the world with the Revelation of truth, whether it be by few, or by many, by thoſe that are learned, or thoſe that are look'd upon as men of ſmall underſtanding. Nay,

Luk. 10. 21.

Secondly, if we conſult with the tenor of Gods providence and diſpenſations in this kind, our information or answer will be according to the tenor of our Saviours gratulation (being now in a kind of rapture or exultation of ſpirit) unto his Father: *I think thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* Though God be at libertie, to make the firſt diſcovery, or communication of the light of his Truth, unto the world, by greater numbers of men, and thoſe learned and in high eſteeme for wiſdome, as by Councils, Synods, and Conventions of men eminent in their qualifications, as well as by one or fewer, and theſe under no great obſervation for either; yet by the more frequent experience of all ages it appeareth, that he taketh pleaſure in this latter way, rather then in the former. Doubtleſſe it was not without ſome very conſiderable ground and reaſon, that that ancient and learned Father **Gregorie Nazianzene* ſhould ſay, that he never ſaw good end, or deſirable ſucceſſe of any Councell; or that they procur'd any decreaſe, but rather increaſe of evils. Yea and adds: that the pertinacious contentions, and inordinate deſires of domineering or bearing rule, were ſuch, as words could not expreſſe. Him (ſaith the Apoſtle) *God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly: not unto all the people, but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, even unto us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead.* *Mary* a woman, had both the firſt revelation made unto her of Chriſts riſing again from the dead, and alſo the firſt interview and ſight of him after he was riſen. *Job. 20. 12. 14.* The Scripture takes ſpeciall notice of *Lots* departure from *Abraham*, before God was pleaſed to make that excellent diſcovery of himſelfe unto him, ſpoken of, *Gen. 13. 14, 15.* &c. Yea, moſt of thoſe revelations of himſelfe, which he was graciously pleaſ'd to impart unto his ancient Church of the *Jewes*, were not imparted

*Μηδὲ μίας σου
νόδῳ τέλει
εἶδον χριστόν,
μηδὲ λούσω
παῶν μάλλον
ἐχρημάς, ἢ
ἀποθανόντα. Αἱ
τοὺς φιλονεικί-
αι, καὶ φιλαρχί-
αι, καὶ λέγει
ἀποστόλους. Καὶ
θαύτω δὲ τῆς
ἐκκλησίᾳς κα-
λίαν ἐτέρων
δυνατῶν, ἢ τῆς
ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ;
Greg. Naz. ep.
55. ad Proco-
rium.
Act. 10. 40. 41

unto them by their Synedrion or Great Councell, but by particular men; who likewise usually (if not alwayes) received their inspirations from God, in their greatest privacie and sequestration; yea, and that (if the observation of the Rabbins will hold in that behalfe) whilst they were yong. That light of Evangelicall truth, wherein the Reformed Churches rejoyce at this day, yea, and triumph over Antichristian darkness, did not break out of the clouds of Councils and Synods unto them, but God caused it to shine upon them, from scattered and single starres, as *Luther, Calvin, Zwinglius, Martyr, &c.* God never took any pleasure to cumber his arme with flesh and blood, when he meant to doe any great thing for his Church by it. Wee find him once complaining right out, that *the people were too many for him*, to give deliverance or victory Judg. 7. 2. by; but we never heard of any complaint from him that they were too few. And why may we not think, but that God may as well say within himselfe, that there are too many learned and wise men in a great Councell, for him to reveale truth, or to give victory against error by? The reason of this kind of dispensation is obvious; and therefore I forbear (for the present) to insist upon it.

3. As a presuming confidence of a mans leggs, is a signe of such a time or chance (in *Solomons* phrase) wherein the race shall not be to the swift; and so the challenging a victorie, as it were of course, because we have chariots, and hories, and vast multitudes of men, expert in warre above our enemies, is a presage seldome failing, that *the battell will not be to the strong*: in like manner when Synods and Councils shall beare themselves inordinately upon their numbers and multitudes, upon their wisdom, learning, and pietie, and because of these, shall (upon the matter) challenge an infallibilitie (for what doe they lesse, when they command all mens judgements and consciences to bow downe at the feet of their determinations?) this is little lesse then an authorized ground of Divination, that they will miscarry, and that God will not honour them, with the discovery of any of his Truth unto the world. A Synod or Councell, though of men never so conscientious and learned, though never so both frequent and fervent in fasting and prayer before God, that shall assemble and meet together upon such terms, I mean so as either to expect, but especially peremptorily to conclude, before hand, that all men shall make faith and practise of their decisions, or else be censur'd, and made to suffer like

evill

Ezek. 14. 3.

evil doers; do in this set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquities before their face: and consequently devalue themselves of that capacitie, wherein they should be meet to enquire of the Lord. Should I be enquired of at all by them? (saith God himselfe, Ezek. 14. 3. of such) Indeed where greater numbers of men, accomplished with grace, and parts of learning, shall assemble together with humility and meekness, and for ends proportioned to the line and sphere of men, as viz. candidly and impartially to argue and debate, and so to finde out the Truth in things appertaining unto God, onely with an intent and desire to be *helpers* of the Saints, as by making rough things plaine, and things that were hard, easie, and dark things, light some, and not to exercise a *dominion over their Faith* (as the Apostle speaketh) by an authoritative commanding them out of their present judgement, what ever it be,

2 Cor. 1. 24.

to do homage to the results of their debates, whether they see light and truth in them or no; they may expect a speciall presence of God with them, and the Churches of God about them, may comfortably waite for somewhat more of the minde of Christ from them, then they knew. In the multitude of such Counsellors, there may be *safetie*, as Solomon speaketh. I would gladly beleieve, if I could find where to set the sole of the foot of such a Faith, that Councils and Synods are wont to meet upon such terms: which if they do not, I am (almost) as farre out of hope of having the joy of my Faith holpen or increased by them, as I am of gathering grapes from thornes, or figgs of thistles. And therefore,

Prov. 24. 6.

4. (and lastly,) Whereas the objection urgeth, that wise men are like to see more then those that are weak, and many, then few: I answer, That this is not alwayes found true, no not in naturall, civill, or artificiall things, wherein notwithstanding there is usually a greater regularitie and uniformitie in the actings and workings of second causes; much lesse is it alwayes true in matters belonging unto God; wherein himself more frequently interposeth by his prerogative, and ordereth the tenor and course of occurrences and defects, besides the proportion of second causes, by the good pleasure of his Will. All the great and rare inventions of the world, which either former, or latter ages have brought to light, were not the issues or results either of the thoughts or studies of the wisest or learnedest of men, nor yet of the consultations or communications of the greatest numbers or multitudes of men:

but the wise Disposer of all things, according to his owne good pleasure and will, cast his honour upon particular and single men, (for the most part) and those not alwayes of the most learned or profound, as by many instances might readily be evicted, if it were necessary. And *Solomon* reports unto us a case, wherein one *poore man* by his wisdom delivered a City out of imminent danger; which (it seems) all the rest of the Inhabitants did not see or apprehend how to do. Yea, in Councils themselves, or greater assemblies of men, it is usually seene, that some one, or few, either of predominant parts, or authority amongst them, sway and steere all the proceedings, and act the judgements and affections of the rest, though conscientious and learned to a degree. So that upon the matter, and just accompt, the resolutions of Councils and Synods themselves, are but the fruits or putting-forth of the learning, and judgement of a very few men; and whether these be alwayes of the most conscientious, I had rather others should consider, then I determine.

Eccles. 9. 15.

The last objection designed for present examination, is this: that the intent and project of this Way, is ambitious, high, and dangerous, that it affecteth a Dictatorship Ecclesiasticall, a Power of Law-giving, that it undermines Civill or Parliamentary Authority, &c. But to this also wee answer (omitting what was formerly said, concerning extravagant height of accusations and charges, and the slender probability of truth in them: as likewise concerning the speciall disposition of God in ordering the malice or ill will of those that are enemies, either to his people or wayes, still to shoote the arrowes of their accusations against their *breast-plate of righteousness*, where it is strongest and least penetrable.)

1. That there is not the least colour, no, nor the least colour of a colour, to charge any ambitious or Dictator-like designe upon this Way. The reason is, because the most essentiall, intrinsecall, and fundamentall principles of it, stand diametrically bent against all dictating, and law-giving by men, in the things of God. The Sunne may with as much, or more reason be suspected of consulting darknesse against the world, as this Way of meditating or projecting any Authoritative greatnesse unto it self in this kinde. Indeed, when it degenerates from it self, and passeth into another kind, there may be some danger and fear of this Way; as there is that Honey should turn into choler, when the native property of

of it is altered by the stomach. A Congregationall man become a Classique, may as soon as another make a Son of such a designe as is specified in the objection.

2. If the *Way* wee speak of, should be so contradictory to her self, as to desire or project such a Kingdome, as she stands charged with in the Objection; yet should not the world have the least cause to fear her prosecutions or executions in this kinde. If the Lamb in the fold should threaten or project the slaughter and destruction of all the Lions in the Wildernesse, had these ever the more cause to be afraid of her? The kingdomes and powers of this world, need not fear either the numbers or power of the Saints, for taking away their crowns, or breaking the scepters of their rule and government, untill the world that now is be translated into that which is to come. And therefore,

3. Whereas this *Way* is further arrested by the Objection, for a Pioner and underminer of Magistracy, or Parliamentary Authority; I answer, that there is no more in this *Way* to undermine or endanger any Civill Authority or Power whatsoever, then there was in *Daniels* heart to prejudice the life and honour of the King, when hee prayed three times a day, (contrary to the Kings commandement) or then was in *Pauls* Doctrine of *Justification by Faith* to make voyd the writings of *Moses*, or the Law; whereby indeed he did establish it (as himself affirmeth, *Rom. 3. 31.*) though the *Jewes* apprehended; and charged him with the contrary. And doubtlesse the learned Gentleman, who undertakes the unmasking of Independency, (which never wore any) is in an utter mistake, not only of the intentions of the two Brethren of this *Way* (who ever they were) whose words he citeth, p. 3. of his late *Examination*; but also of the rationall and Grammaticall construction and import of the words. For whereas they say, *that a man may as well bring a clean thing out of an unclean, as make a spirituall extraction out of a secular root*, the Gentleman will needs interpret, that they make both Parliament and Assembly *secular and unclean*, whereas by the tenor and carriage of the whole passage, it is as cleare as the Sun, that in neither of these expressions they reflect either upon the one, or the other; no, nor yet in those following words, wherein they affirm, *that it will be demonstratively prov'd* (against their adversary, who makes the Law of the State the first and most considerable band or tie upon men, for their submission to his Church-govern-

Independen-
cy examined
unmask'd, &c.

government) that he resolves the government of the Churches of Christ (in the last resolution of it) into the humors, wills and pleasures of the world, yea, of the vilest and most unworthy of men. And therefore, whereas upon his citation of these words, his demand is, *Brethren, bona verba quæso*, the Brethren upon his interpretation of them, have far more reason to make this request unto him; Brother, *bonam glossam quæsumus*. The words are good, if the interpretation did but answer. For doubtlesse the Brethren in the mentioned period & expressions, reflected only upon the generality of the people in the Land, who according to the Laws of the Land; yea, according to the principles of all reason and equity, have the right of nominating persons into the places of Parliamentary trust and power; but have no Authority or power from Christ to nominate or appoint, who shall be the men that shall order the affairs of Christs Kingdom, or institute the government of his Churches. These, and especially the ignorant & irreligious part of them (which they that know any thing concerning the generality of the Kingdom for matters of Religion, must needs know to be far the greater part in every place) are that *secular root*, out of which the Brethren conceive an impossibility, that a *spirituall extraction should be made*; that is, that a legitimate Ecclesiastick power should according to the mind of Christ, or any precept or president of Scripture, be by them conferred upon any man: and this impossibility conceived by them, they only illustrate and declare by that parallel expression in *Job*, *Who can bring a cleane thing out of an unclean*? When they imply, that men unworthy, and strangers to the power of godlinesse, and matters of Religion, have the right and power of conferring Parliamentary trust and power, upon persons chosen by them hereinto, they reflect not the least touch of prejudice or disparagement upon the persons honored with that choice: First, because there is no other way, no, nor is there any convenience, or lawfulnessse of any way whereby to ascend the height of the interest & honour, but such a choice: And secondly, the votes and voices of such men being carried upon persons of honour, worth, and Religion, demonstrates that there was so much the more of God in their election; which is so far from diminishing their honour in the least, that it adds double and treble unto it. But to hold that the persons so elected, as hath been said, have a power by vertue of such nomination or election, to enact Laws and Statutes in matters of Religion, and to order under mulcts and penalties, how

men shall worship & serve God ; as it is a means to awaken the eye of jealousie upon them, and so is seven times more destructive unto, & undermining, not only of their power, but of their honor, peace, and safety also, then any thing that is found in the *Way* so ill intreated; so is it the setting of a power upon the electors of such persons; I mean, upon the promiscuous multitude of the land, a greater power then ever Jesus Christ himself had, at least then ever he exercised. For as *dare Regem* argues a greater power then *esse Regem*, as he *that buildeth an house, hath more honour then the house*, Heb. 3. 3. So to nominate and appoint who shall have power to umpire in matters of conscience and of God, to determine what shall be preached, and what not, what shall be beleaved, & what not, is a branch of a greater root of power, then the exercise of the power that is committed unto others in this behalf. Now though Jesus Christ had a power, and was authorized by God to be a Law-giver himself unto his Churches and Saints, in their spirituall Republique ; yet it is hard to prove that ever he invested any other with such a power. His Apostles themselves were *no Lords over the Faith* of the Saints ; nor had they any power or authority to impose any thing upon men, as necessary, either to be beleaved or practised, but what they had in expresse commission and charge from Jesus Christ himselfe to impose upon such terms. So that notwithstanding that severe and angry contestation of the fore-mentioned Gentleman against the two Brethren, with their fellows, *Is this your so much boasted of preaching, writing, fighting for the rights and priviledges of Parliament?* whereby he thinks to dash both them and that *their boasting* together out of countenance; though they boast neither little nor much of any thing ; boasting is their charge, not their crime ; they onely say, and that with modesty yet, blessed be God, they are able to maintain and make good that their *boasting* (if it must needs be so called) in the sight of God and Angels, and men, and Devils, and *whatsoever besides is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come*. And though he hath done like himselfe, and (I speak it to his honour) far above the line of many others, in vindicating the rights and priviledges of Parliament; yet (*absit verbo invidia*) I am very confident, that there are thousands of that *Way* & judgement, against which his pen riseth up with so much indignation, who rateably, and according to their means and opportunities, have quitted themselves upon equall terms of honour, love, and faithfulness, towards those honourable Houses, with himself.

4. (And lastly) It were no task of mine to demonstrate that the *Way*, in the defence wherein I have appeared, is so far from carrying any malignity, or leaning towards it in the State, or persons invested with civill power, that it is of a manifest and right compliance both with the one and the other. He that commands *to give unto Cesar the things that are Cæsars, or unto God the things that are Gods* did *Cesar* as much (if not more) service, in the latter course, as in the former. Silver and gold, wood and stone, never got any thing by having an artificiall deity bestowed upon them, and being worshipped, but only a meer proximity to destruction. They that should have said unto *Herod* that he had spoken like a sober and well-woulded man, might have shewed as much affection to him, yea, and honoured him upon better terms, then they that shouted, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man.* There is no foundation so sure and precious to build the honour, peace & safety of *Cesar* upon, as a stone duly pitched for a land-mark between God and him. But if there be a question or difficulty betwixt God and *Cesar*, whether such and such things belong unto the one, or unto the other, they will be found the best and fittest Counsellors unto *Cesar*, who shall advise him rather to surrender unto, then to claim a doubtfull right or privilege from God. The *Way* we speak of is so ingenious, loyall and true-hearted to men in place of civill authority and power, that it teacheth his sons to expose themselves unto their displeasure, for the procurement of their good; which even the heathen themselves have attested for one of the best and least questionable signs of true friendship and love.

To these answers of objections, I thought to have added some positive arguments, whereby the *Way*, now little more then only defended, might have gained the honour of a more perfect conformity to the Will and Word of God, then (perhaps) hath been discovered or thought hitherto. Yet I cannot but think, that the valles of the principall objections which covered the face of it, being rent, and torn, the purity and brightnesse of it must needs shine forth in the eyes of all those who have not sacrificed unto partialitie.

To close with a word of exhortation. The premises considered, as we love the things of our peace, and desire the speedy dispersion and scattering of that dark and black cloud still hanging, and hovering over our heads, and threatening more fiery storms & tempests of persecution and blood upon us, and to see the heavens cleering up, and looking like a fallow or Saphire over us, as we desire to see those terrible mountains

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4. (And lastly) It were no task of much labour, or industry, to demonstrate that the *Way*, in the defence whereof we have thus far appeared, is so far from carrying any malignity, or seed of danger in it to the State, or persons invested with civill power, that it is of a manifest and rich compliance both with the one and the other. He that commanded to give unto *Cesar* the things that are *Cesar*s, & unto God the things that are Gods, did *Cesar* as much (if not more) service, in the latter command, as in the former. Silver and gold, wood and stone, never got any thing by having an artificiall deity bestowed upon them, and being worshipped, but only a meer proximity to destruction. They that should only have said unto *Herod*, that he had spoken like a sober and well-advised man, might have shewed as much affection to him, yea, and honoured him upon better terms, then they that shouted, *It's the voice of a God, and not of a man*. There is no foundation so sure and precious to build the honour, peace & safety of *Cesar* upon, as a stone duly pitched for a land-mark between God and him. But if there be a question, or difficult case between God and *Cesar*, whether such and such things belong unto the one, or unto the other, they will be found the best and faithfullest Counsellors unto *Cesar*, who shall advise him rather to surrender unto, then to claim a doubtfull right or priviledge from God. The *Way* we speak of is so ingenuous, loyall and true-hearted to men in place of civill authority and power, that it teacheth her sons to expose themselves unto their displeasure, for the procurement of their good; which even the heathen themselves have attested for one of the best and least questionable signes of true friendship and love.

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Mar. 12.

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beasts

Locusts and Caterpillars, which now devour & eat up our good Land daily, swept away and carried by a strong west wind into the midst of the sea, that we may be fed again with the ancient heritage of our fathers, I mean plenty, safety, & peace; if there be any bowels, any compassions in us towards our nation, (so far spent & wasted with misery) towards our cities and habitations, towards our friends, towards ourselves, towards any thing which is dear either to the one, or to the other; let us be exhorted to take heed of *fighting against God*; let it be the first-born of religious advicements and cautions to us, not to be fierce, no, nor so much as to lift up an hard thought against Doctrine or *Way* claiming origination and descent from God, till wee have securitie upon securitie, conditions as cleer as the noon-day, that they are but counterfeits and pretenders onely, and stand in no relation at all, but that of enmity and opposition unto God. Particularly, let us be tender above all tendernesse, to as to the value of the least haire of our heads in any way of bitterness or blood, against that *Way* of governing the Churches of Christ, which hath by so many good hands been presented unto us as most agreeable unto the Word and Will of God, untill we see the condemnation of it written with a beam of the Sun, by the finger of God himself; untill he hath disclaimed or renounced it from heaven, either by giving such wisdom unto men whereby to detect the error and vanitie of it, or else hath quite razed it out of the fleshy tables of the hearts of his Saints, and distressed servants. The motion and matter is of a most serious and formidable importance; therefore let me exhort you yet once more, to *beware of men*, (as our Saviour advileth, in a case of lesse consequence) to take heed, that no man, either through passionate exclamations and outcries, or through any faire or flourishing pretences whatsoever, draw your foot into this snare, engage you in any such warfare, wherein, for ought you know, you shall *fight against God*. If your judgements stand off from the cause wee speak of, for the present, and you can see nothing of God in it; you may please to consider, that this was the case of many thousands amongst you, in whom there is much of God, and in whose heart is this

Phil. 3. 15. *Way*, as a *Way* of his. If they be deceived in imbracing it, God will shew mercy unto them in revealing the truth unto them in due time. But if you shall be deceived in the violence and fury of your *fighting* against it, is it not much to be feared, that you will be intangled with

Isa. 21. 14. the guilt of such a sin, which shall not be purged from you till yee die?